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FOREWORD

THIS COUNTRY has produced remarkable personalities in every walk of life since the earliest times. Our history is crowded with names of outstanding persons who have made notable contribution whether in art, literature, politics, science or other fields. Some are household words. There are many whose names are familiar but about whose life and work little is known to the public. There are others about whom people know little but who have made remarkable achievements.

The history of a country is, to a great extent, the history of its great men and women. They have moulded it and built it up. It is essential for the ordinary citizen to know something about these personalities in order to understand how our country has evolved. The National Biography Series proposes to make available in a simple narrative form the life of such great men.

The hero of the present volume, Abdur Rahim Khan Khanan, popularly known as 'Rahim', occupies a unique place in the history of India. One of the nine jewels of Akbar's court, a pillar of his empire, adept in war and diplomacy, a universally loved refuge for the distressed and the needy, he was even greater as a patron of artists and poets and a poetical genius. Rahim was, above all, an Indian of Indians. It is a striking fact that Rahim has made for himself a permanent place in history, not

by his talents in diplomacy and war which are little remembered now, but by his genius as a poet who has created inimitable gems which are the pride of Hindi Literature. On account of his poems, his memory is evergreen among millions of his Hindi speaking countrymen. But the life-story of so interesting a personality is buried in legends. No historian appears to have studied his diverse achievements in the domain of politics as well as literature in a balanced way. In this book, Dr. Samar Bahadur Singh has prepared the biography of Rahim on the basis of the available original sources for the ordinary reader bringing out both the aspects of his life—political as well as literary. It is hoped the book makes this remarkable personality—a real synthesis of Hindu-Muslim culture—better known to the public.

I am grateful to Shri M. V. Desai for taking the trouble of editing the manuscript so well.

B. V. KESKAR

NEW DELHI
August 15, 1967

I

BY ANCESTRY, Rahim was a Turkoman or 'Tartar'. The original habitat of the Turkomans was the Aralo-Caspian basin from the fringe of the Kara Kum desert as far east as the Amu Dariya. They divided into two 'hordes', known as the Horde of the White Sheep or Aqa-quilu and the Horde of the Black Sheep or Qara-quilu. Roaming free with their flocks in the desert, these nomads pressed westward. On the eve of the rise of the Safavi dynasty of Persia, the Qara-quilu Turkomans were found in possession of almost the whole of Persia ruling in virtual independence.

Abdur Rahim's father, Bairam Khan Khan Khanan, traced his descent from the Great Amir Ali Shukr Beg of the Baharlu Turkomans of the Black Horde. During the reign of Shah Ismail Safavi of Iran, Bairak Beg—grandfather of Bairam Khan—lost his ancestral fief in Iran and settled in Badakshan holding there a fief from Sultan Mahmud Mirza. Bairak's son, Saif Khan, died at Ghazni, leaving his son Bairam to be brought up by his great-grand-aunt, Basha Begam. At the age of sixteen Bairam entered the service of Babur, then ruling in Kabul.

When Emperor Humayun recovered his *masanad* of Delhi in 1555, the first thing he did was to marry a new wife and give another to his most loyal Amir, Bairam Khan, then nearing sixty. These brides were the daughters of Jamal Khan Mewati. Soon after marriage, Bairam as the guardian of young Akbar was sent from Delhi to Lahore where the Sur pretender Sikandar had again

raised the banner of revolt. The Prince and his guardian were busy in the Punjab settling the affairs of that province when in January 1556, Humayun 'who tumbled all through life at last tumbled out of it'. When news reached Bairam at Kalanaur in Gurdaspur district, he seated his princely ward on the *masanad* of state. But Adali's general Hemu, sweeping westward with an army of the Afghans to roll back the Mughals beyond the Indus, rendered the position of the Mughals almost untenable. Hope left every heart except that of Bairam. As a precaution, however, he sent his Mewati wife, who was expecting a child, and other members to Lahore when the Imperial camp broke up for a march upon Delhi.

The second battle of Panipat was fought and won, but Sikandar still persisted in his designs. The new Emperor and his Vakil once again marched to the Punjab. During this advance against the Sur pretender, news reached Bairam Khan that a son was born to him at Lahore on Thursday, 17th December 1556 This child of auspicious omens was Bairam's only son and heir, Abdur Rahim. The father celebrated the occasion with a great feast.

The Sur pretender submitted at last. For four years (1556-1560) Bairam brought up his imperial ward. He slowly built up for him a kingdom in a land where earlier the Mughals could hardly call any terrain as their own. The Regency of Bairam, his services to the Mughal Empire, devotion to the Emperor, the justice or injustices done to him by Akbar—all these have no place in this biography of his son Abdur Rahim.

Bairam made his submission, resigning himself to the will of the Almighty and His shadow on earth, Emperor

Akbar. The last favour he sought of the young Emperor, to whom he played the good uncle in his boyhood, was the permission to start on his last journey, a pilgrimage to Mecca. Akbar, recalling only the loyal services of the old benefactor of his house, amply provided him with the means of a peaceful journey to the holy city of Abraham. Bairam Khan with his family and the infant heir made his way to the far-famed city of Patan in Gujarat. Here the Afghan chief Musa Khan Fuladi received him most hospitably.

Bairam spent his days at Patan in calm resignation and the spiritual joy of a prospective Haji. But all the while the blood-feud of a Pathan was dogging his footsteps. On January 31, 1561, he went on a boat trip to the famous Sahasra-linga lake. While alighting from the boat, he was mortally stabbed by a Pathan named Mubarak Lohani, whose father had been killed in 1555 at the battle of Machiwara by the Mughal army commanded by Bairam. The motive behind this murder was perhaps pure revenge, blood for blood or a conspiracy of blood-thirsty Afghans.

The murder of Bairam was a signal for vagabonds of the city of Patan to fall upon his defenceless camp. It was sacked. Insults were heaped upon his family. Some faithful followers of Bairam managed to extricate Rahim and his mother from the clutches of unscrupulous Afghans. They fought their way with difficulty to Ahmedabad. After four months' stay there, they left for Agra. In obedience to an imperial summon, Abdur Rahim was presented at court in September 1561. In spite of the insinuations of malicious courtiers, the Emperor received the boy with parental affection. Finding 'notes

of nobleness on his lustrous forehead', he put him under royal protection. Soon after Abdur Rahim was conferred the title of Mirza Khan.

Abdur Rahim inherited from his father valour, sagacity, charity, literary interests and statesmanship. With the restlessness of Turkoman and the culture of Iran, there mingled in Abdur Rahim's veins fiery Meo blood and Rajput chivalry of Hindustan which had been assimilated by a ruling aristocracy even as it was converted to Islam. Pride of royal lineage and the correct courtly manners were noticeable in Rahim even during his boyhood. As for religion, Abdur Rahim was a Shia on the father's side and a Sunni on the mother's : but he was neither a Shia nor a Sunni of the orthodox type.

Abdur Rahim grew up as an apt intellectual, spiritual and political disciple of Akbar. The Emperor's court was his school. Here the boy had a strenuous and rigid training. In the din and bustle of the camp and the labyrinth of intrigue and diplomacy, Abdur Rahim, like his master, remained a close and earnest student, a seeker of knowledge who knew no satiety all his life. But like Akbar, he was not an unlettered literary genius who learnt through ears as well as eyes. His literacy was not a subject of controversy.

Near contemporary Persian chronicles yield little information on the early education of Abdur Rahim. *Maasir-i-Rahimi* mentions one Mullah Muhammad Amin of Andijan (Trans-Oxiana), a famous scholar of his time, as Abdur Rahim's tutor appointed by the Emperor. From the Emperor downward, almost every Hindustan-born Turk picked up Hindustani and spoke it except at court. But a knowledge of Turki was considered essential for the

members of the Imperial family and the children of the Muslim aristocracy of foreign extraction. This was to preserve their link with the 'Vilayat' or home in Central Asia. Bairam wrote poems in Turki and so did Abdur Rahim in later life. The latter was one of the few who were equally at home in Persian and Turki, and of all scholars of his time, he was commissioned to translate 'Tuzuk-i-Babari' from Turki into Persian by Akbar.

Abdur Rahim had a flair for languages and dialects, an enthusiasm for learning, a liking for poetry, and for Hindustan and Hindus. We are in the dark as to when and from whom Abdur Rahim acquired knowledge of Sanskrit and Hindi but the literary environment of Akbar's court was extremely favourable for learning these Indian languages. As early as 1564 Akbar and his father and grandfather of the line of 'Chakatta' (Chaghtai) are eulogized by the author of the 'Akbar Shahi-Shringar-Darpana'. Times had changed from the days when the Brahmans refused to teach the language of the immortals (Deva-Bhasha) to a *mlechha* like Al-Beruni in the eleventh century. The magnetic personality of Akbar made a South Indian Pandit and Mulla Badauni to work on a Persian translation of the *Atharva Veda*. Of all the Hindu scholars, Gang Kavi, was known to have been closest to Abdur Rahim. It was perhaps from Gang that Abdur Rahim learnt Sanskrit and caught the fire of Hindu poetry.

By his long association with Pandits and Hindi poets Abdur Rahim acquired a detailed knowledge of the religious literature of Hindus. After Al-Beruni and Abul Fazl, Abdur Rahim may claim to be the third among famous Muslim scholars who studied with zeal and sym-

pathy the learning of a people considered to be subjugated. His scattered Hindi verses bear testimony to this fact.

Akbar brought up Abdur Rahim as his son, rather cousin, and gave him the honoured epithet 'Farzand' (son). The only other boy, whom Akbar trained up as an ideal Amir was Kunwar Man Singh, a peer of Abdur Rahim in statesmanship and warlike fame. Akbar's task was done to his utter satisfaction. Later on he handed over Prince Salim himself to the charge of his political and intellectual child Mirza Khan whom he appointed the *ataliq* (guardian) of the Prince.

The Emperor always kept young Abdur Rahim about his own person like a gentleman-in-waiting. His abilities were put to a hard test in various positions at court, not ordinarily given to a novice. But the promising youth amazed his elders by acquitting himself creditably. This was hardly pleasing to the nobles hostile to Bairam Khan. This rise in the favours of the Emperor alarmed them. Therefore, when Abdur Rahim attained majority, Akbar gave to him in marriage Mah Banu Begum, a sister of the powerful Amir Mirza Aziz between whom and the Emperor 'flowed a river of milk'. He thus secured for him powerful family connections with the Atka-Khails and their backing at the start of his career at court. Mah Banu remained the principal consort of Abdur Rahim.

Mirza Khan saw his first active services at Ahmedabad in September 1573. He then commanded the centre of the Imperial troops which had gone to Gujarat for the second time to put down the insurrection of the rebel chiefs. The Gujaratis, taking advantage of the Emperor's absence, had raised a formidable revolt under the leadership of

Muhamad Husain Mirza and Ikhtiyar-ul-Mulk Habshi. They besieged the Mughal Governor Khan-Azam in the capital city. Akbar, on hearing of it, made a forced march of nine days with a few trusted comrades including Mirza Khan and took the rebels by surprise. The battle, despite overwhelming number of the enemy, was won. The province was once again freed from the turbulence of refractory chiefs. Though the victory was entirely due to the Emperor's reckless courage and valour, Mirza Khan, at the tender age of seventeen, was entrusted with the most responsible command of the centre—a place reserved only for the commanders-in-chief (Sultan-i-Lashkar). This speaks highly of the promise he gave of generalship.

The year 1576 marked another rise in Mirza Khan's career. At this time the governorship of Gujarat had fallen vacant due to recall of Khan-Azam. The Emperor appointed young Mirza Khan to this coveted post. He promoted him to the rank of 4000 *mansab* and deputed experienced nobles to advise him in his arduous task and to carry on the administration in his name. This was really an honour conferred upon him only in name.

Mirza Khan's stay in Gujarat was short. Akbar wanted to give him some practical lessons in military science by associating him with renowned generals of his age. An opportunity presented itself soon. Next year Raja Bhagwan Das and Kunwar Man Singh were deputed at the head of a select force to chastise the unyielding Rana Pratap. After his defeat at Haldighat in June, 1576, he had retreated to the defiles of the southern hills. Mirza Khan was recalled and associated with them. The imperial forces, however, only partially succeeded in their task;

the Rana remained unconquered. He persisted in his attempts to resist the Mughal power.

But Akbar could not find rest till Rana Pratap was brought to unconditional surrender or destroyed. When he learnt of Rana's defying attitude, he again despatched a party of Amirs with instructions to devastate the Rana's territory and capture him. Mirza Khan was included in this party. The imperial troops commanded by Shahbaz Khan, invested the mighty fortress, the Rana's abode, early in April 1578. A severe battle ensued. The Rajputs put up stout resistance, but they could not hold out for long. The commanding talents and unlimited means of the imperial forces soon rendered resistance impossible. The Rana, finding fate against him, left the fort at midnight and escaped to inaccessible hills once again.

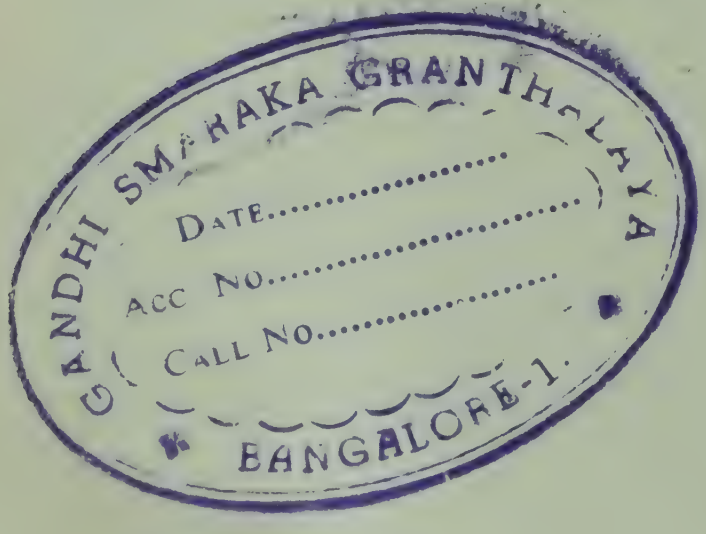
The year 1580 marks a turning point in the early career of Abdur Rahim. Till now his activities were confined to the fields of battle and he had been able to develop his soldierly qualities. But he had yet to learn the lessons of administration, indispensable to any successful statesman. The governorship of Gujarat conferred on him four years ago was more a token assignment of honour: the province was administered by his deputy in his name and also in his absence. The first real administrative job came to Mirza Khan in 1580 when he was elevated to the coveted post of Mir-i-Arz (Officer-in-charge of Petitions). During Akbar's time the post of Mir-i-Arz was one of the four great positions of the Mughal Empire, the other being the charge of the Harem, the governorship of a remote province, and the governorship of Delhi. This was a newly created post. The practice followed so far of promoting one of the principal servants to this high office on each day of the

week had not proved satisfactory. The pressure of ever-increasing work had made the appointment of a separate man completely free from other responsibilities to this job imperative. Moreover, most of these officers were rather unscrupulous and the corruption and bribery prevalent among them had cautioned the Emperor to select a man 'of unsuspected integrity, high lineage and unsurpassed ability'.

But Mirza Khan's term of appointment as Mir-i-Arz too was short. Soon his services were transferred to the disaffected province of Ajmer where the Mughal Governor Dastam Khan had failed to restore order by crushing disturbing elements and had met his end as the result of a wound inflicted by a Kachhwaha Rajput rebel named Achal Singh. Ranthambhor, which formed a part of that subah, was granted to him as his personal fief.

Hardly had Mirza Khan remained in his new assignment for a year when he was called upon to take up the appointment of guardianship of Prince Salim, the heir-apparent of the Mughal throne. The Prince had already crossed his twelfth year, and the Emperor was anxious to entrust the unruly boy to the care of an Ataliq who could make the right kind of tutor at that impressionable age. The choice had first fallen on Qutbuddin Khan, but he could not be spared from the governorship of troubled Gujarat. So in 1582 the Emperor recalled Mirza Khan from Ajmer and entrusted the Prince to his care. The honoured youth celebrated the occasion with a feast in which the Emperor shared joyously. In addition to his duties as guardian, Mirza Khan was also appointed to act as Atabegi in charge of horses belonging to the Royal stable.

Mirza Khan's office of Ataliq to Prince Salim proved a trying and thankless job. The Prince was not amenable to discipline. Even His Imperial Majesty had the privilege of fondling his child but not to frown on him. Salim was the adopted child of the childless Sultan Salima Begum and the grand child of Hamida Banu. Their indulgence incited this boy to defy every effort to make him attend to his lessons or listen to his teachers. How Abul Fazl, the first ataliq of Salim, fared at the hands of his pupil can be read in the malicious pages of the historian Badauni. Mirza Khan, who had greater tact and insight into human character than the more learned Abul Fazl perhaps succeeded a little better. Many years after, when Salim ascended the throne and began writing his Tuzuk (autobiography), he seemed to have entertained no positive dislike for Mirza Khan though he is put among the 'old wolves of the state' with Mirza Aziz and Man Singh. However, luck befriended Mirza Khan and saved him from any discredit in the eyes of the Emperor. He had managed his royal ward for a year when he was called upon to lead an army against the rebels of the newly conquered province of Gujarat.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II

THE CONQUEST OF GUJARAT did not prove easy. Though Akbar had as easily overrun the whole peninsula during his first expedition as his father, the restless Mirzas again broke into open rebellion soon after the Emperor's return to the capital. And the annexed province was well-nigh lost. So a second expedition became a necessity. The young Emperor, proceeding by forced marches covered the long journey in nine days and inflicted a crushing defeat on the disaffected leaders of the rebels. After order was restored, he appointed Shahab-ud-din Khan as viceroy of Gujarat. This side-tracked and sorely disappointed Itimad Khan, the old king-maker of Gujarat, who had once solicited Mughal intervention, and had handed over the kingdom to the Mughal Emperor in the fond hope that Akbar would merely be content with lip allegiance and leave him virtual ruler.

The Mughal viceroy Shahab-ud-din Khan failed to act vigorously. His policy of appeasement proved beneficial neither to him nor to the Empire. He was an astute politician and realised that Akbar had pushed him into stormy Gujarat—then bristling with military adventurers either to succeed or sink.

Shahab-ud-din's policy of appeasement of the erstwhile rebels (whom he had taken into the imperial service despite the Emperor's repeated instructions to the contrary) was not approved by Akbar. The puppet of Gujarat, Sultan Muzaffar Shah III, who had been captured during the first expedition to Gujarat and kept under imperial surveillance as a State prisoner with an allowance of

Rs. 30/- per mensem, fled from the custody of the Mughal officers in 1578. He took refuge first in Rajpipla and later with the warlike Kathis who looked upon him as a nephew of their tribe through his mother, the daughter of a Kathi chieftain of Kathiyawar. Akbar considered Itimad Khan ex-king-maker and now a Mughal grandee as a safer person than Shahab-ud-din Khan. So he sent an order of recall to him, nominating Itimad Khan as Viceroy in his place.

Itimad Khan formally took over the charge. But he refused to take the expensive liability of keeping in service the unwanted soldiery and officers entertained by Shahab-ud-din. So a wrangle began and the turbulent elements complained that they had been thrown overboard by this change of administration. The fugitive Muzaffar proved a much abler politician than he was suspected to be. From his retreat he closely followed the quarrels between the retiring and the incoming Mughal Governors, and the volume of discontent among the restless elements in the country. The unhappy military adventurers now invited Muzaffar to strike openly for the throne of his ancestors and expel the Mughals.

Muzaffar, an opportunist, at once responded to this appeal. Having collected a large army of Kathis, Rajputs and some predatory tribes, he marched straight for Ahmedabad. The whole countryside seemed to rise in support. The Mughal Viceroy left Ahmedabad in charge of some officers and himself went to Kari, about forty miles away for soliciting the help of Shahab-ud-din Khan. Before they could agree on joint action, Muzaffar entered Ahmedabad in triumph after feeble Mughal resistance on April 4, 1583. The Imperial army then engaged Muzaffar's

army in a pitched battle, though only to save their skin because Shahab-ud-din was not the man to fight the battle of victory for Itimad. Their defeat was a foregone conclusion, and a pretext was now needed for them to flee to Patan. Gujarat was lost to all intents and purposes. Muzaffar Shah III set up his court in the capital of his ancestors as the rightful sovereign.

News from Gujarat filled the Emperor with misgivings. There was no dearth of senior and war-worn nobles to lead the imperial armies; but there were only a limited few among his Muslim Amirs upon whom he could safely rely in a crisis. In the end the Emperor decided to send young Mirza Khan over their head as Viceroy of Gujarat.

Akbar fully realised the gravity of task assigned to that young lad of twenty-eight and took ample precautions to ensure success. He deputed a number of tried officers to assist Mirza Khan. The main army under the command of Mirza Khan was to march to Patan by the direct route via Jalor. Qulij Khan, the jagirdar of Surat, and Naurang Khan were deputed to proceed to Malwa where they were to join Mirza Khan after taking all the fief holders of that province along with them. An order was also sent to Qutb-ud-din Khan, Governor of Baroda, to keep himself in readiness to help Mirza Khan in time of emergency.

But before Mirza Khan could reach Patan, Muzaffar had further consolidated his position in Gujarat. To make his sway over the province complete, he proceeded to dislodge the imperialists from Patan in the north, and Broach and Baroda in the south—two strategic centres which they were still occupying. The army under Sher Khan Fuladi, the right hand man of Muzaffar, advanced north and engaged the Mughals at Masana about 30 miles south of

Patan. The Imperial troops fighting under the spirited leadership of Nizam-ud-din, the celebrated author of the *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, inflicted a crushing defeat on the Gujaratis. Sher Khan Fuladi, facing heavy odds, fell back upon Ahmedabad, leaving behind a large number of his adherents dead on the battlefield. But the imperialists failed to profit by this victory. The Mughal officers busied themselves in sharing the booty captured from the enemy, thus losing one more chance of maintaining sway over that frontier province.

Meanwhile Muzaffar Gujarati, learning of Qutb-ud-din Khan's intended march to Ahmedabad, acted in time. Leaving his capital under Mir Abid, the rebel leader, he advanced southward and besieged the Mughal governor's army at Baroda. Qutb-ud-din offered stout resistance for twenty-two days. But the treacherous nature of the garrison ultimately forced him to sue for peace. On November 23, 1584, being assured of protection of his person and property, he came out of the fort. Muzaffar violated his plighted word, put him to death and occupied the fort.

Soon after Muzaffar also occupied Broach. Popular support greeted him from all sides, and he was acknowledged as the lawful sovereign of Gujarat.

The news of Qutb-ud-din's murder and Muzaffar's startling successes disheartened the Mughals. They gave up the hope of fighting Muzaffar, who had seized abundant wealth and who was now being actively supported by all sections of Gujaratis. They thought now of their safety and decided to leave Patan for Jalor. At this critical moment, news reached them that the Emperor had appointed Mirza Khan to suppress the revolt in

Gujarat and that the new Viceroy was soon coming to their help. Shahab-ud-din Khan could not but take the appointment of young Mirza Khan as an insult to the old nobility of the Empire, especially to himself. Itimad Khan was less perturbed, though he too shared the sentiments of his rival. However a band of faithful officers awaited the arrival of Mirza Khan. Their firmness prevented the disloyal and lukewarm elements from retreating or openly rebelling.

On September 22, 1583 Mirza Khan took leave of the Emperor at Fatehpur Sikri. As instructed, he took the direct route to Patan via Jalor with a small but brave army of veteran Rajputs, Sayyids and Pathans Advancing by regular marches they soon reached Mirtha, a small town 76 miles north-east of Jodhpur. Here Mirza Khan received the disconcerting news of Qutb-ud-din's surrender and murder from a messenger sent by the Mughal officers at Patan to acquaint him with the latest developments. But Mirza Khan gave no inkling of this even to his closest confidants. It was an act of prompt decision and wise counsel, hardly to be expected in any other than the self-confident son of Bairam. To soldiers already worn out by the fatigue of a long and forced march and demoralised by the fear of enemy strength, a disclosure of this disaster would have proved discouraging.

Some delay was unavoidable perhaps at Jalor to allow the rear to join the main body and give time to the local jagirdars to bring their men. Besides, some of Mirza Khan's companions cautioned the zealous youth to look before he leapt and not to make undue haste.

Mirza Khan entered the city of Patan on December 31, 1583. His arrival at once had a tonic effect on the

drooping, sinking spirits of the Mughal officers. They had been planning a retreat, if not flight, to Jalor and bidding good-bye for ever to troublesome Gujarat. The presence of the new Viceroy filled their hearts with fresh hope. His arrival was celebrated as a day of rejoicing.

Mirza Khan halted at Patan only for a day. He called a council to plan the future course of action and invited the experienced officers to express their opinions freely. Alternative proposals were put forward by them: one was that they should stay on at Patan till the arrival of the Malwa Army and advance towards Ahmedabad only afterward; another proposed that it would be short-sighted to march further unless the Emperor in person arrived to take up the command. But Mirza Khan and his own officers advocated the advisability of prompt action and immediate advance. A heated discussion followed. Ultimately Mirza Khan's proposal was unanimously accepted. Next day, having left Itimad Khan in charge of Patan, Mirza advanced towards Ahmedabad.

Muzaffar Gujarati was at Broach, enjoying the sweet fruits of military triumph. He left that fort to the care of his brother-in-law, and hurried in the direction of Ahmedabad. On January 12, 1584 he encamped at Mahmudnagar on the left bank of the Sabarmati, about two miles from his capital. There he arrayed his troops in the traditional fighting formations. He stationed himself in the centre and gave the right and left commands to trusted generals.

Mirza Khan, along with some experienced Mughal *mansabdars*, including Shahab-ud-din Ahmad Khan, commanded the centre of Akbar's army. The right wing was under the charge of captains noted for valour. The

left wing was entrusted to brave Rajput *mansabdars*. In the van were some Rajput and Sayyid officers. The reserve was placed under the command of the historians Nizamuddin and Masum Bhakhari who chronicled the event afterwards.

The Mughal troops, thus arrayed, marched towards Ahmedabad. On his way, Mirza Khan learnt of Muzaffar's advance from Broach at the head of a formidable force and his subsequent encampment at Mahmudnagar. Here again, he kept the news of the enemy's movements a secret. Apparently he received the alarming reports brought by his scouts lightly and told his followers that it was all rumour, devoid of truth. But at heart, he was alive to the dangers ahead. His usual resourcefulness came to his help. With a view to counteracting depression among his soldiers frightening the enemy, Mirza Khan produced a fictitious royal *farman*. It read that the Emperor in person himself was proceeding to that quarter at the head of a large army; until his arrival, they were not to make haste in engaging the enemy. This had its desired effect. His army held another grand feast to celebrate this occasion and a gloom was cast over the enemy's camp. Hoping that the news of Akbar's coming to Gujarat might frighten Muzaffar into abandoning the idea of engaging the Mughals and also that the Malwa troops would arrive soon to reinforce them, the Imperial army marched on, by passing the enemy's camp at Mahmudnagar, without any encounter.

But there were deeper calculations behind the production of a forged *farman* and the festivities. Mirza Khan wanted to avert an engagement at that inopportune place and time. Muzaffar had stationed his troops on the left

bank of the river and Mirza had to cross it to engage the enemy. It would have been the height of folly for him to fight the overwhelming forces of Muzaffar with the river at his back. It was against all the rules of military strategy. But the voice of the young general could not prevail over his grey bearded associates unless it enjoyed Imperial sanction. The fictitious *farman* silenccd all dissent. It averted a crisis which might have resulted in the total loss of Gujarat for the Mughal Empire.

At last on 14 January, 1584 Mirza Khan halted at Sarkhej, a village about six miles southwest of Ahmedabad and one mile northwest of a sharp bend in the Sabarmati where it takes a south-east course. Muzaffar hearing of Mirza Khan's advance towards Sarkhej and his halt there, left his camp at Mahmudnagar. He crossed the river near Usmanpur, about a mile to the northwest of Ahmedabad, and moved hastily towards that quarter. He pitched his tents opposite the Imperial camp at a distance of about four miles. Muzaffar's men made a night attack, but they were foiled in their attempt and had to fall back. Next morning the Imperial army strengthened their position against any sudden attack. Save a few scattered and successful skirmishes, no pitched battle took place for the next two days. The Mughal commander, anxious to avoid an engagement till the arrival of the troops from Malwa, was trying to gain time. On the other side Muzaffar, already alarmed at the reports of the approach of the Emperor and the Malwa reinforcements, was growing impatient for a decisive action, lest the delay should ruin his chance of victory. So the fight could not be postponed for long. At last, Muzaffar, on 16th January arrayed his army for an offensive.

It was past noon. Mirza Khan was reluctant to engage the enemy at this late hour, but there was no choice. So he marched forward. To counteract the designs of Muzaffar who was believed to be coming with a detachment to make a surprise attack on the Mughals from the rear, the Mughal commander deputed Rai Durga with a portion of the reserve including Nizamuddin Ahmad and Masum Bhakhari to attack the enemy from behind, keeping the village of Sarkhej to their right.

A pitched battle took place. The action was short but sharp and decisive. The opposing vans attacked each other, engaging their opponents in a fierce hand-to-hand combat. Soon the action became general. The Rajputs and Sayyids of Barha, maintaining their traditional love of fight and fame for obstinate valour, displayed exemplary courage on this day. But the enemy, far superior in numbers, formed a mass too thick to be pierced.

Mirza Khan was in the centre with three hundred seasoned veterans and one hundred fierce and lofty elephants. He kept a watchful eye on every section of the army. Muzaffar, now finding the flanks engaged, issued forth from the centre. Backed by six or seven thousand picked soldiers, he moved forward for breaking through the Mughal centre. Terror seized the Mughal hearts. A few urged retreat. But Mirza not heeding timid counsel spurred his horse thick into the fray and under the cover of his elephants led his centre forward. As the gigantic animals, including the celebrated *Shermar* moved ahead, Muzaffar lost his firmness. Just at this moment Nizamuddin unexpectedly charged from the rear. This was followed by Rai Durga's encircling attack from the left. The enemy's position became untenable. The rumour

of the Emperor's arrival to conduct the war added to their apprehensions. Losing hope of success, they took to flight. Muzaffar, deserted and forlorn, could not stand his ground for long. He fled towards the river Mahi.

It was near sunset. The victors, worn out in a deadly combat, cared little for pursuit. They rested at night in their camps at Sarkhej. At dawn they made a triumphant entry into the capital city. To perpetuate the memory of this glorious victory, Mirza Khan ordered a garden to be planted and a memorial to be erected on the site of the battle. The garden bore the name of Fateh Bagh (Garden of Victory) and became a pleasure resort for the people of Ahmedabad.

The battle of Sarkhej is a landmark in the career of Mirza Khan. Blessed with good luck, the young commander won his victory over a far superior enemy by his never-failing tact, extra-ordinary resourcefulness and valour. The Mughal army was an ill-knit group of discontented officers, a house divided against itself. It was Mirza Khan's genius that succeeded in employing them successfully.

Muzaffar Gujarati, despite his terrible reverse, was not disheartened. He cherished the hope of recapturing his dominion by scattering liberally his fabulous wealth. Marching along Mahi, he reached Cambay where he seized a huge treasure accumulated by the prosperous merchants of the port. He bestowed presents lavishly upon those who promised to stand by him, and soon a large number of deserters flocked back. Once again, he put himself at the head of a large force to face the Mughals and snatch victory from the jaws of defeat.

Meanwhile, the Malwa army reached Ahmedabad three

days after the battle of Sarkhej. A council was held to determine the future line of action. Opinions were sharply divided. At last joint action was agreed upon.

Hardly had the imperialists marched a stage or two when they made a halt and wasted time. Mirza Khan had remained behind to look after the administration. He disapproved of this policy of 'wait and watch'. Entrusting the capital to a band of trusted officers, he joined the lingering army. His arrival infused new vigour among the hesitant troops: the onward march to Cambay was resumed.

Muzaffar, alarmed at imperialist advance, could not stay at Cambay for long. He fled from the port. Crossing the Narmada, he got off to Nandad, the capital of Rajpipla. Meanwhile Mirza Khan, who had reached Baroda halted there for sixteen days.

Mirza Khan's forced halt at Baroda was necessitated by unfavourable circumstances. In fact, the new viceroy was being obstructed by his lieutenants ever since he assumed command. Mirza Khan's letters to Abul Fazl bear testimony to the fact that the young commander was not receiving active and willing cooperation of his experienced captains. They seized every opportunity to discredit the leader. They busied themselves more in mutual recrimination than in confronting the enemy. His success in a province where they had failed would have been a double disgrace. The cautious commander could resume his advance towards the hilly tracts of the Satpura only when he felt assured that these officers would not turn out to be broken reeds in time of need.

At last the southward march began. Muzaffar, taking advantage of the Mughals' mutual dissensions, eluded

capture. When he learnt of their advance, he left Nandod for a hilly tract named Kohchampa, about 120 miles south of Ahmedabad. Enclosed on three sides by the Satpura ranges and on the south by a tributary of the Tapti, the place was well fortified for the refuge of the fugitive prince. But Muzaffar's evil stars followed him. Soon the Mughals arrived at Nandod.

On March 10, 1584, Mirza Khan moved forward from Nandod to the hilly tracts where the rebels were reported to be regrouping their strength. The troops were arrayed in battle order. Mirza Khan, with old Shahab-ud-din by his side, led the centre. The two flanks were composed mostly of the Malwa army, which bore the brunt of the ensuing fight. The van was led by Rai Durga Sisodia and Payanda Khan Mughal. The historians, Khwaja Nizamuddin and Mir Masum Bhakhari, then serving under Mirza Khan, were placed in the reserve. When the army reached the environs of the Champa range in the Rajpipla district, Mirza Khan sent Nizamuddin with an advance guard forward to reconnoitre the enemy's positions.

As Nizamuddin's detachment moved forward, he came in contact with an advanced infantry force of the rebels. A sharp skirmish followed. The insurgents were pushed back to fall upon the high hill where Muzaffar's forces waited in battle array. Heartened by this initial success, the Mughal army moved on to the final encounter. As the ground was uneven and slippery and the cavalry found it difficult to advance, the infantry was pushed forward. Soon a fierce action ensued. The terrific discharge of arrows and bullets bewildered the opponents. There were heavy casualties on both sides. The enemy's advantageous position baffled them. Meanwhile the Imperial left wing,

commanded by Qulij Khan, approached the hill. He was assisted by Khwaja Rafi, a seasoned veteran of the Mughal army who had just arrived, and made a general assault. Unable to stem the tide of this onrush, Muzaffar withdrew a little. But the next moment reinforcements came to their relief, and they succeeded in repelling Qulij Khan's section to some distance.

This was the most critical stage of the battle. Had the Gujarati troops stuck to their appointed positions and maintained their regular formations, they might have remained unbeaten. But, tempted by the discomfiture of the attackers, they broke order and rushed pell mell in pursuit of Qulij Khan. This provided the needed opportunity. Finding their front open and unhindered, the Mughal van section climbed up the hill. When their enemy, after pushing Kulij Khan's division to a safe distance, returned, they found their positions lost. Realizing their blunder they turned back and engaged the Mughals in a close combat.

While the opposing flanks were thus engaged in desperate fight, Nizamuddin managed to secure some elephant guns (Hathnals) which he had requisitioned from Mirza Khan. These guns had been carried to the battle field on the backs of elephants. They were to be used in such a time of emergency. The volley of shots fired from these guns at the place where Muzaffar himself was stationed, caused havoc. Qulij Khan had maintained his ground well in the low-lying hillocks which had provided him the needed shelter.

Muzaffar could not stand the overriding tactics of the Mughal army for long. The shower of fire from above and a vigorous attack from below had made his position

untenable. When the elephant guns started a terrific discharge of fire at his division and caused the slaughter of his trusted companions, he got unnerved. Unable to offer further resistance, he took to flight, leaving 2000 of his followers dead.

The news of the second victory over Muzaffar reached the Emperor at Fatehpur. He offered thanks to the Giver of Victory and issued gracious *farmans* to the Amirs of Gujarat exalting them to various favours. Mirza Khan—now only in his twenty-eighth year—was honoured with the coveted title of Khan Khanan. He was raised to the rank of 5000. Other officers, too, were awarded.

After his second victory over Muzaffar, Khan Khanan crossed the Narmada and set out for Ahmedabad. On May 6, 1584 he made his triumphant entry. So far the administration had not got its due share of his attention. He now attended to the reorganisation of the administration. The problems of a province, torn by strife and devastated by continued warfare, were gigantic and perplexing. They had baffled veteran administrators like Shahabuddin and Itmad Khan, and it was no easy job for the young viceroy to find satisfactory solutions. But within a stay of seven months, Khan Khanan infused a new vigour in the administrative machinery. His unsparing pains restored law and order.

Muzaffar, hunted down by an active band of imperialists could not afford to remain long in the hilly regions. He got out of the defiles of Rajpipla and set off towards Patan.

Khan Khanan sent a detachment to intercept him on his northward march. Finding Mughals close to his heels the fugitive turned towards Idar—64 miles northeast of

Ahmedabad. But there too his path was blocked. His only hope of succour was from the Kathis. Giving up his intention of proceeding north or east, he turned westward and came to Kathiawar. Here his fabulous wealth soon collected around him avaricious followers. Above all, he purchased the support of two powerful chiefs, Amin Khan Ghori of Junagadh and Jam Satrasal, Raja of Jhalawar. Assured of their assistance which was to follow Muzaffar's departure towards Ahmedabad, the fugitive king started once again to try his luck.

But Khan Khanan was on his guard. Getting intelligence of Muzaffar's advance towards Ahmedabad, the Mughal commander dispatched three detachments in different directions to cover the capital city against any surprise. Having strengthened the strategic outposts, Khan Khanan on November 22, 1584 issued himself from his capital, now left to the care of Qulij Khan, and proceeded westwards to chastise the rebel pretender.

Muzaffar had advanced as far as Morvi—a town thirty; five miles northeast of Rajkot. He was waiting there for succour from his newly purchased allies. But the chiefs, traitors at heart, never turned up. They were too shrewd to take up the cause of a fallen prince against the Mughals. Alarmed at the rapid advance of the Khan Khanan and seeing no prospect of help, Muzaffar turned back. Passing through Rajkot, he retired to the Barda hills 'a favourite refuge for outlaws in disturbed time'.

The Mughal commander then marched off four divisons of his army, three under his lieutenants and one under himself. But the rebel king remained untraced. Hotly pursued from every direction, he gave up the hope of evading capture for long. Ultimately he turned back once

again towards Gujarat. Hearing this, Khan Khanan proceeded towards Ahmedabad. But before he could reach the city, Muzaffar had already been defeated and routed by a Mughal contingent.

The happy news reached Khan Khanan at Morvi. Returning to the capital, he again busied himself restoring law and order and thus giving much needed relief to the people in the recovered area. Meantime an Imperial summons from Fatehpur directed the Viceroy to proceed to the metropolis as soon as he was satisfied with the condition of affairs in Gujarat. Muzaffar had been defeated thrice. Most of his supporters had either been crushed or won over. There seemed to be no probability of an upheaval in the immediate future. So in obedience to orders, he in August 1585, proceeded to Agra.

From his letters to Abul Fazl, it appears that his recall was partly of his own seeking. He was disgusted with the melevolence of his jealous co-workers who seized every opportunity to bring him into discredit. He had repeatedly represented to his patron to rescue him from the troubled politics of Gujarat. As Akbar was pre-occupied with the problems of the north and unwilling to move to that distant quarter he might possibly have summoned Khan Khanan himself to counsel and help him.

Khan Khanan's stay at the court did not last long. Muzaffar continued to trouble the imperialists in Gujarat. The Viceroy's presence became imperative. Soon after, when the Imperial camp was marching towards Punjab the Emperor gave leave to Khan Khanan to resume his duties in Gujarat.

On his way at Sirohi, Khan Khanan undertook the reduction of the two intervening independent principalities

of Sirohi and Jalor. The existence of these two independent states on the strategic route between Agra and Gujarat could not be tolerated by Akbar who dreamt of establishing an all India empire.

Khan Khanan had sent for a detachment from Ahmedabad which, under Nizamuddin, soon joined him. The Raja of Sirohi, alarmed at the approach of the Mughals, meekly submitted. His unconditional surrender with a large tribute and a promise to recognize the suzerainty of Akbar, was accepted. Now Khan Khanan turned his attention to Ghazni Khan, chief of Jalor. Ignoring Khan Khanan's call for surrender, he thought of resistance. But finding the circumstances against him, he too had to submit. Yet his humiliation did not make up for his former arrogance. He was deprived of his possessions and carried in chains to Ahmedabad.

Khan Khanan's second term of Viceroyalty was comparatively peaceful. He kept busy with administrative problems and exerted his utmost to improve the economic condition of the province. Muzaffar, too, terrified of the Mughal arms and too busy dealing with his treacherous allies in Kathiawar, could ill afford to measure his sword with the Viceroy.

Khan Khanan served the Emperor in Gujarat for four years with devotion and courage. His military skill was proved in the battles against Muzaffar, and the pretender seemed to have exhausted all his means to regain his throne. His administration had restored order in a chaotic province. His liberality had won him the admiration of friend and foe alike. Now he could look forward to other ambitious projects. The opportunity presented itself when Akbar summoned him to the court in response

to his request to be allowed to serve under him in the proposed Badakshan expedition. Khan Khanan left Ahmedabad, and joined Akbar in Lahore in March 1587.

III

Between the two signal achievements—suppression of the revolt in Gujarat and Khan Khanan's victory over Mirza Jani in Sindh—there came a happy interlude of three uneventful years. Khan Khanan was mostly at court and accompanied the Emperor on his pleasure trips to Kashmir and Kabul, serving him in various capacities. Making the best use of leisure, he translated the Memoirs of Babur from original Turki into Persian. On November 24, 1589 the work was presented to Akbar who was highly pleased to receive the autobiography of his grandfather in Persian and paid many compliments to the talented translator.

A month later, he was promoted to the Vakilship of the empire (Deputy of the Empire) which had fallen vacant after the sudden demise of Raja Todar Mal in November 1589. The Emperor had been anxious to find a suitable successor. The idea of appointing Khan Khanan to this key post struck his mind while he was still beyond the Indus on his way back from Kabul. He gave the New Vakil the jagir of Jaunpur in exchange for the one he had in Gujarat.

The bestowal of Vakilship was the highest honour to which a Mughal courtier could aspire. The Vakil was next only to the King. Khan Khanan's father, Bairam Khan, was the first noble to adorn this post, and during his time the powers exercised by him were extensive. By the time Khan Khanan was appointed to the post, the Vakil had ceased to be the moving spirit of the State and the motive power of the administrative machinery. But his

position as the first noble of the State still remained and he held the highest rank.

These years constitute the most valuable part of Khan Khanan's literary life. The melody of waterfalls in Kashmir and the blossoming meadows of Kabul awakened in him latent poetical instincts which developed in all their charm and vigour in his later life. It was perhaps at this time that Khan Khanan, now fief-holder of Jaunpur, met Tulsidas, "the tallest tree in the magic garden of medieval Hindu poesy". The poet lived at Varanasi. In later years, Khan Khanan was mostly away from the north, but the friendship once contracted might have continued. Khan Khanan had hardly completed a year as Vakil, when his military skill was called for in the Qandahar campaign which the Emperor commissioned him to undertake. Soon after, this changed into a campaign against Sindh.

By the close of the 1589, Akbar's position in the northwest had been strengthened. The only independent ruler who defied the imperial power was Mirza Jani in Southern Sindh. Before he could be brought into submission, an opportunity presented itself in Qandahar which the Emperor was reluctant to miss.

Akbar had long desired the possession of Qandahar. On account of its strategic and commercial importance, it was regarded as the key to the north-western frontier. 'In an age when Kabul was a part of the Delhi Empire, Qandahar was our indispensable first line of defence'. In 1590 after their father's death the two sons of Sultan Hussain Mirza the nephew of the Shah of Persia and his governor at Qandahar began to trouble their royal master at the instigation of his enemies, the Turks and Uzbegs.

So Akbar, under the guise of friendship, offered to relieve the Shah of his difficulties. A large and well-equipped army under the supreme command of Khan Khanan was appointed to proceed to Qandahar. This was a ruse to utilize this rebellion and capture Qandahar. But this clever stroke of policy did not have an early success.

On January 4, 1590, the vast army left Lahore and took the route to Qandahar via Baluchistan. The commander was entrusted with the task of reducing the wild tribes of Biluchis. In the event of their peaceful submission, their country was to be restored to them and their assistance utilized in the proposed conquest of Qandahar. But if they proved recalcitrant, they were to be suitably punished. Khan Khanan had been instructed to send a detachment also against Mirza Jani Beg of Sindh, who, despite his professions of loyalty and lavish offer of presents, had delayed his personal presence before the Emperor. This action was meant to be a warning. If the proud chief were to join the expeditionary force or agree to pay his respects to Akbar in person, he was to be left unmolested; otherwise he was to be punished only on the return march from Qandahar. To facilitate his task, Multan and Bhakhar, the two intervening fiefs, were given to Khan Khanan as his Jagir in lieu of the one he held at Jaunpur.

Soon Multan was reached. From here the Mughal army were to take the usual route to Qandahar via the Chotiali Pass. But Multan and Bhakhar being his fief, Khan Khanan preferred to follow a comparatively longer route to enable him to look after his new Jagir. It was perhaps at this time that the idea of diverting his army from Qandahar and to move against Mirza Jani

Beg entered his mind. The Mughal commander represented his views to the Emperor who, falling in with the proposal, accorded sanction to the change of plan.

The motives that actuated the shrewd commander to change his plan are evident. Khan Khanan realised the dangers that lay ahead in the hilly tracts of Qandahar. Difficulties of transport, lack of co-operation among the Mughal *mansabdars*, his inferior artillery and lack of other siege materials, coupled with his inexperience of fighting in a far-off mountainous region, were also factors to be tackled.

Secondly, Sindh, though not a fertile country, promised a richer yield than Qandahar. Khan Khanan's letter to Abul Fazl reveals that at that time the former was in financial difficulties. His charitable disposition and lavish rewards to poets had exhausted his purse.

Akbar also had his reasons for agreeing with his general. He realised that for the success of Qandahar expedition, the conquest of the bordering provinces of Sindh and Baluchistan was essential. The rear of the Mughal army could be safe when he was the master of the two bases. The strategic importance of these provinces for extension of the North-Western Frontier was later realized also by the British. Moreover, soon after getting news of Akbar's proposed expedition against Qandahar, the ruler Muzaffar Hussain sent petitions and presents to Akbar.

Khan Khanan's picked force was composed of veteran Iranis, Sayyids of Barha and some Hindus together with one hundred big elephants and a park of artillery. Hardly had he proceeded a few miles beyond Multan, when the Biluchis submitted and assured the Mughal commander of their loyal and active co-operation. Next came

Bhakhar. But before the Mughals moved forward, Mirza Jani sent representations to Khan Khanan professing his loyalty to the Emperor and offering to contribute a contingent to assist in capturing Qandahar. Khan Khanan, familiar with the tactics of the Sindh ruler, was not to be taken in easily. He ordered the envoys to be imprisoned and hastened his march to Thatta. The imprisonment of the Sindh emissaries proved to be a wise step; for their return might have disclosed military secrets, and Mirza Jani, anxious to gain time, could have strengthened his resistance.

While the Mughal army was moving hastily towards its objective, news reached that a devastating fire had broken out in the fort of Sehwan and the provisions stored there had been destroyed. Heartened by this providential help, Khan Khanan despatched two divisions, one by land and the other by water, to besiege the fort. The naval troops with audacious rapidity, soon reached the fort. Finding their route clear, they moved on further to take possession of the Laki Pass on the west bank of the Indus in Kotri Taluqa. After a feeble resistance, this strategic pass fell to the Mughals.

Soon after, the Mughal commander with the remnant of his army arrived in the vicinity of Sehwan. He got intelligence that Mirza Jani had left his capital. At the head of a large force, together with many fighting vessels (gharabs) and a well equipped artillery, he was proceeding northwards to oppose the Mughal army. He raised the siege, recrossed the river and marched along with the left bank to meet the advancing foe. Before his departure, the cautious commander had taken ample precautions to safeguard his rear.

Mirza Jani advanced to the village of Buhiri, situated between natural barriers on the bank of the river Indus. He entrenched his army in its bank which easily gave a defensible position.

To intercept the enemy on the way, Jani despatched three divisions of his army. One, composed of 120 armed vessels and 200 warboats equipped with bowmen, musketeers and a large piece of cannon under the command of his favourite Khusru Khan, proceeded by water; and the other two, along both sides of the river by land. The three divisions were to keep in touch with one another and make a simultaneous attack on the enemy.

Khan Khanan was three miles northeast of the village Bhit Shah. On learning of the enemy's movement, the Mughal commander moved close up to the bank at a point where a large sand bank made the river run in a comparatively narrow channel. Here, throwing up earthworks to line the bank and protect his guns, he waited for the attack.

In the afternoon of October 31, 1591, the enemy's fleet appeared in sight. The original plan of Mirza Jani to make a concerted attack on the imperialists both from land and water was doomed to failure. The unpopular Khusru could not achieve the co-operation of land forces. They were tired of his arrogance and seized the occasion to their ill-will against him. They did not extend their co-operation, thus leaving him to his fate. When he discovered the truth, he was in the neighbourhood of the Mughal camp. Retreat was out of the question. Still undaunted and with the odds heavy against him, he resolved to attack the Mughals with his fleet. Arriving at the sand bank, the encamping ground of the Mughals,

he opened fire. A fierce battle raged.

Khan Khanan had occupied a position of great military advantage. On one side there was water with a sand bank; on the other, water with a fort. The Mughal artillery was heavier than any the enemy's fleet could carry. It was now directed from a point of vantage. As the day advanced, action grew fiercer.

At night a report reached Khan Khanan that Mirza Jani was coming up to attack the Mughals from the west bank. At once a body of troops crossed the river under the cover of darkness to intercept him. A little later, the detachment which Mirza Jani had despatched along the left bank of the river made an abortive attempt to surprise the enemy camp. But the Mughal commander had posted a picked force under Mir Masum Bhakhari for meeting such eventualities. The assailants were easily repulsed with no harm to the fort. Meanwhile, the detachment sent against Mirza Jani, finding no trace of him returned and taking up position on the sand bank started terrific firing from the west.

Thus heavily attacked from both the banks, Khusru struggled on until dawn. Then the Sindh commander renewed the attack with vigour, directing it against the detachment on the sand bank. At first gunners in the Mughal camp, with their guns pointed too high, often missed their targets and the shots, passing over the adversary's vessels, fell on their own party on the opposite bank. But the error was rectified and Khan Khanan's fire told heavily on the attacking fleet. The Sindhis fought with the courage of despair.

But how long could they resist such heavy odds Engulfed by volleys of shots from both sides and assailed

in the front by the Mughal flotilla, they suffered heavy losses both in men and materials. Even their expert naval fighters—the Europeans and the Malabaris—had started giving way. Khusru was obliged to retreat. He carried it out skilfully and gallantly. He was once overtaken and actually captured, but managed to escape. Khan Khanan in his usual way celebrated the victory by holding a grand feast and offering thanks to the Almighty.

Mirza Jani took precautions to withstand a protracted siege. The popular support of the peasantry assured him of supplies. If he could resist the Mughals a few months more, Nature would come to his rescue. The torrential rains of Sindh, flooding all the rivers and streams, would force the invaders to withdraw.

On the day following victory, the Mughals took up positions in front of the Buhiri entrenchment. Khan Khanan made a personal survey of the surroundings and distributed the posts. The place was sieged. But the Mughals failed to storm the sand fort.

Two months passed. The fruitless siege operations still continued. With the Imperial Navy much inferior to that of the Sindhis, they could not stop the reinforcements and provisions reaching the fort by water from outside. The Mughals were harassed; their supplies were cut.

Khan Khanan wrote a pathetic letter to Akbar, then on his way to Kashmir, requesting immediate help. Substantial relief was at once despatched to Sindh.

But even this timely assistance could not lessen the miserable plight of the besiegers. Stationed in a hostile territory with all their supplies cut off, they could ill-afford a protracted siege.

It was a critical time for Khan Khanan. His usual

resourcefulness came to his rescue. He still commanded a force superior in strength to the enemy. So he thought of a *ruse-de-guerre* to compel Jani Beg to get out of his impregnable position. If he were to succeed in his plan and met the enemy in a pitched battle, he could easily dispose of the fighting force of Lower Sindh entrenched at Buhiri.

The Mughal commander gave up his fruitless attempt to starve or storm the Buhiri garrison. The entire strength of the army was broken into five divisions. One division with a strong flotilla was sent northward to resume the siege of Sehwan. The other three were despatched to strategic points in Lower Sindh. With the fifth division Khan Khanan himself proceeded southward to establish his headquarters at Jun—a central place situated on the river Ren. From here he could direct the operations of his divisions now scattered over the whole of Lower Sindh.

This move was a wise stroke. Results justified his expectations. The Muguals ravaged the fertile country and succeeded in securing ample supplies. The enemy was forced to leave his fortified position and decide the issue in open field.

Meanwhile the Mughal division proceeding northward with their fleet reached Sehwan. The scanty garrison with their supplies cut off from Lower Sindh were soon reduced to great extremities. Pressed hard, they appealed to Mirza Jani for relief. Jani left camp, crossed the river and marched northward. This gave Khan Khanan his long sought for opportunity. He promptly sent a detachment to Buhiri, now vacated by Jani. The Mughals destroyed the entrenchment which had enabled Mirza Jani so long to remain at bay. A strong force was kept there.

When Mirza Jani's advance towards Sehwan became known, a strong contingent was despatched under Daulat Khan Lodi, his vakil.

The Mughal's new move took Jani Beg by surprise. Overconfident of his superior strength, he never expected such daring steps. The rapid advance of Daulat Khan's detachment and its junction with the Sehwan division two days earlier sounded too good to be true. But when the dust of their marching troops became visible, he had to prepare for action.

The Mughals had already arranged their troops. At about noon the hostile forces sighted each other. The enemy's van under Khusru Khan made a dashing charge and overpowered the opposition. This initial success of the Sindhis caused alarm among the Mughal ranks. Having cleared off his front, Khusru now fell upon the Mughal right wing and defeated them.

Dhan Bahadur, the son of Raja Todar Mal, challenged Mirza Jani to measure sword with him in person. Arab Bahadur, Mirza Jani's foster brother, pretending to be Mirza Jani, fought a bloody duel with him. The fight created such excitement that for a while all fighters flocked to witness this desperate duel. During the fight, the Raja was struck in his forehead with a spear and Mirza Jani, coming from behind, unhorsed him. The brave youth, backed by some of his supporters, continued the fight. But the bleeding wound soon proved fatal. With their van and right wing broken, the Mughal were already in difficulties when their right wing suffered a reverse from the attack of Malik Muhammad. A number of Sindhis rushed towards the Mughal camp and started plundering.

This was the most critical stage of the battle. But luck befriended the Mughals. The broken left wing of the Mughals, finding some of the opponents engaged in plundering, moved ahead. Taking advantage of a sudden dust storm, they attacked the enemy. The centre also arrived to give support. With this united strength, the left wing commander inflicted a crushing defeat on his opponents. The approaching darkness added to their success. The concerted attack of the Mughals rendered Jani's position untenable, and he fled, leaving behind a large number of adherents dead or wounded.

Embarking on a boat, Jani proceeded southward. When he learnt of the Mughal occupation of Buhiri, he was nonplussed and finally sailed towards Unarpur, 40 miles from the scene of his defeat.

Surrounded on three sides by the curving river and approached only on one side through land, Unarpur was the most strategic place for Mirza Jani to take refuge in. Here once again he threw up strong earthworks all around. The support of the peasantry and his strong flotilla assured him of supplies. The approaching rains gave him a fair prospect.

The Mughal commander invested Unarpur. Grown wiser since the Budhiri siege, he took all conceivable precautions to make his investment effective. Khan Khanan in his youthful zeal took a vow that he would neither shave nor enter the bathroom till the fortification was reduced.

The siege continued for a month. Khan Khanan in spite of constant effort could not achieve his end. The advent of rains weakened the position of the Mughals. Scarcity of provisions was another great hardship. In his plight

Khan Khanan once again appealed to Akbar and a strong reinforcement with provisions and money was rushed to the relief of the hard pressed forces. The arrival of timely assistance raised the morale of the besiegers and the siege was pressed on more vigorously.

Now the tables turned. Mirza Jani's confidence in the impregnable strength of his entrenchment began to give way. The flooded river with its overflowing banks diminished his area of resistance. His sand walls were no longer siege proof. Enveloped from three sides by "the armies of waves" (Afwaj-i-Mauz) and one side by the Mughals, his position became untenable. Pestilence broke out and took a heavy toll of lives. His command over the river also began to weaken and his supplies failed to arrive in time. With nature and enemy both against him, he opened negotiations and his messengers approached Khan Khanan with terms for peace.

Khan Khanan accepted the offer of peace on the following terms :—

(*i*) The fort of Sehwan with 20 war boats would be handed to the Mughals.

(*ii*) Mirza Jani would affiance his daughter to Mirza Irij, the eldest son of Khan Khanan.

(*iii*) The Sindh ruler after the expiry of the rains would go to the imperial court to render homage to the Emperor in person.

After the terms had been ratified, the siege was raised. The Mughals agreed to spend the rainy months in the fort of Sehwan. Mirza Jani, after three months' stay during the rains at his capital Thatta, was to proceed to court where the Mughal commander promised to obtain a mansab of 5000 for him.

However after the rains, the Sindh ruler did not turn up. His delaying tactics aroused suspicions. To counteract any possible treacherous act, the Mughal commander despatched three divisions of his army. He himself under the pretext of visiting Lahori Bandar and seeing the ocean, followed them a little later and joined them at Buhiri.

But Mirza Jani was no less astute. He explained his delayed departure for the imperial court to bad health which forbade him an arduous and long journey to Lahore. When he learnt of the Mughal's advance towards his capital, he left Thatta and encamped at Fateh Bagh, 6 miles away on the river Ren. He had done so to deceive Khan Khanan that he was proceeding to court. Really, he was waiting for the promised help from the Portuguese.

Cunning tactics did not save his independence for long. The Mughals, under the pretext of driving back the Portuguese to the sea, proceeded on and soon reached Fateh Bagh. Overawed by the threatening Mughals, Mirza came forward and with all professions of loyalty, met Khan Khanan on horse back. The Mughal commander this time took no chances and asked him to surrender his fleet to assure them of his sincere friendship. Mirza Jani had no alternative but to comply. Khan Khanan then left for Thatta.

Khan Khanan visited Thatta where his usual generosity led him to distribute all his effects among the poor and the needy. After visiting Bandar Lahori—the famous port, he returned to Fateh Bagh. The Mughal commander soon left for Lahore along with Mirza Jani in response to an order from the Emperor Akbar.

IV

AFTER HIS RETURN from Sindh, Khan Khanan remained at court for six months. In the meantime, the Emperor decided on an expedition to the Deccan and prepared a large army under the supreme command of Prince Daniyal. Khan Khanan was appointed Prince's guardian and virtual commander.

But hardly had the troops started when the Emperor Akbar revised the plan. He had also asked Prince Murad, then viceroy of Gujarat, to join the main army for this campaign. But if he were to commission two princes in independent command, there was fear of a clash. He consulted Khan Khanan and recalled Daniyal to take charge of the Punjab. Khan Khanan alone was asked to proceed to the Deccan immediately after the rains.

After a short stay at his jagir in Bhilsa, Khan Khanan proceeded to the Deccan. On the way news reached him that Burhan Nizam-ul-Mulk was dead and the Adilshah, taking advantage of the confusion that followed, had attacked Ahmadnagar. Miyan Manjhu, prime minister of Nizam-ul-Mulk, had put a boy named Ahmad on the Nizamshahi throne and threatened by rivals he had approached Prince Murad for assistance and relief.

The news was heartening, but the commander was cautious. He made no undue haste. He realized that unless the strategic province of Khandesh was on his side, it would be unwise to proceed further. So he addressed a letter to Raja Ali Khan, the ruler of that territory, calling upon him to accept the suzerainty of

the Mughal Emperor, strike coins and recite Khutba in his name, and offer cooperation with men and money. In return he was assured of protection and imperial favours. The communication achieved its desired object. Raja Ali Khan accepted the terms and waited upon Khan Khanan near Burhanpur. The meeting was cordial and presents were lavishly exchanged. The Emperor on the recommendations of Khan Khanan conferred the province on its former ruler as his jagir. Thus Khandesh became a protected province of the Mughal Empire. Akbar was highly pleased at this achievement of the commander who by winning over Khandesh, the key to the Deccan, had proved himself a sagacious diplomat and strategist.

But Khan Khanan's diplomatic victory in Khandesh was to cost him dearly. Prince Murad had already been instructed to make preparations for the conquest of the Deccan. Miyan Manjhu's offer to hand over the Ahmadnagar fort if he went to his assistance, gave him further incentive for an expeditious march. He left Ahmedabad on October 30, 1594 and waited for seven months at Baroach for the arrival of Khan Khanan. Tired of waiting and allured by prospects of success, he left in June 1595, expecting the northern army would soon join him. But when he learnt of Khan Khanan's delay and march towards Khandesh, he felt annoyed and sent him an indignant letter.

Khan Khanan did not alter his plan. In his reply to the Prince's letter he pleaded that as Khandesh was strategically important for the Deccan campaign, and as ruler of that place was most likely to join the Mughals, the Prince should wait till his cooperation was assured.

He further advised the Prince to utilize that time in hunting and not to be impatient.

The Prince, anxious to win the prestige of victory for himself and encouraged by intriguing advisers, marched forward alone. The news of this hasty move reached Khan Khanan while he was on his way to Gujarat accompanied by Raja Ali Khan. To avoid further complications, the commander moved with great expedition. Leaving his army behind, he joined the Prince's camp at Chandor near Ahmadnagar.

Khan Khanan, contrary to his expectations, found the atmosphere definitely cool towards him. He begged for an audience, but Murad turned down his request. To add insult to injury, he shifted his camp to a distant place. Ultimately when he granted him interview, his behaviour towards Khan Khanan and Raja Ali Khan was far from friendly. Their relations were enstranged. When the army moved to invest the fort of Ahmadnagar, 'there was no unity among the Mughal forces.'

The kingdom of Ahmadnagar, after the death of Burhan II, had fallen into confusion. The internal dissensions reached their climax in 1559. There were four different parties headed by powerful nobles—each backing its own nominee—as the heir to the throne. Ultimately Chand Bibi, sister of the late King and widow of Ali Adilshah I, succeeded in getting her nominee, Bahadur, recognised as the lawful king. As he was still a minor, she took over the entire administration as regent and prepared to defend the fort.

On December 17, 1595, the combined Mughal army assembled near the city, and the investment of the fort began. The garrison under the spirited command of Chand Bibi, took advantage of the obvious discord in the Mughal

camp and offered stubborn resistance. She called upon the nobles to forget their quarrels in the hour of crisis. Swift messengers were despatched to Bijapur and Golkunda to urge those kingdoms to present a united front to the common enemy. Her appeal found ready response.

The Mughal army made all possible efforts to take the citadel. The siege operations were carried on with full vigour day and night. But the stout resistance inspired by the gallant Chand Bibi set all their attempts at nought.

On December 19, at night Abhang Khan, one of the Abyssinian nobles responding to the overtures of Chand Bibi launched a surprise attack on the eastern entrenchments where Khan Khanan's division had been posted that very day and tried to enter the fort to come to the help of the besieged. He had information that the east part of the fort was not besieged. However on his arrival, he found the gap filled up. In spite of it, the Abyssinian chief tried to rush through and a fierce fight ensued. He suffered heavy casualties, but could get into the fort with a few followers. Had the Mughals followed up this skirmish with a determined assault, they would have been able to enter the fort along with Abhang Khan. But the jealous Murad could not bear that the credit of the victory should go to Khan Khanan. He did not co-operate and a golden opportunity was lost.

The siege dragged on for more than two months without any result. To make matters worse, a confederate army of Adil Shah, Qutbshah and other nobles of the Nizamshahi Kingdom had assembled at Shah Durg on the Bijapur frontier for a concerted action to relieve the fort. Prince Murad was now awakened to the danger and called a council of war. Khan Khanan with others

advocated prompt action and final assault before the allies could relieve the garrison.

Accordingly five mines were run under the bastions, all on one and the same side of the fort. These were charged with gun-powder and then cemented with mortar and stones leaving only a small space where the trains were to to be laid. The entire plan was complete by February 20, 1596. But unfortunate betrayal nullified their hopes of victory. Khwaja Muhammad Khan, Persian officer in their army, had become at heart an admirer of the heroic besieged army. During the night he managed to pass on information to the besieged of the danger threatening them. The defenders at once commenced countermining By dawn they had emptied two mines, filled them with water and were searching for the remaining.

On February 21, early in the morning, Prince Murad, without informing Khan Khanan, advanced to the mines and ordered their explosion. The third mine, being the largest, was the first to be lighted. The Deccanis had just commenced emptying it and when the powder exploded, many of them were killed. A breach about fifty yards wide opened up to welcome the besiegers. But the Mughal leaders unaware of the betrayal waited for the other mines to explode. This delayed their entry into the fort, and the defenders profiting from this interval, dashed forward, threw rockets, powder and other combustibles into the ditch and dragged guns to bear upon the breach. By the afternoon, when the imperialists became aware of the position, they attempted a general assault but the defenders were much better prepared to make a stand. According to a chronicler, "From about 2 o'clock until sunset, force after force of Mughals was hurled against

the breach, to be each time repulsed, until the moat was filled with the bodies of the slain". As the night approached the Mughals had to retire, losing a great opportunity. Next morning when they reorganised and advanced to deliver the final assault, they found the breach repaired. The gallant lady had restored the fallen wall with bricks, mortar and even the bodies of dead men during the preceding night.

The provisions of the Mughals had exhausted and the arrival of the hostile troops allied to the besieged at Bir weakened their morale. Tired and worn out, both sides were anxious for peace and when overtures were made, both welcomed them. Bahadur was recognised as Nizamshah under the suzerainty of the Mughal Emperor and Berar was ceded to the Mughals. The siege was raised on February 23. The first stage of the Mughal conquest of the Deccan was over.

The next eleven months were spent by Khan Khanan in taking possession of Berar, in reducing the refractory nobles, and in maintaining law and order. He felt the necessity of establishing his headquarters at a central place from where the ceded territory could be effectively governed. With this end in view he took the Prince to the heart of the province and after a careful survey they selected a site eight miles south of Balapur. The foundation was laid and the commander shifted his headquarters to this strategic city which was named Shahpur. Here was celebrated the Prince's marriage with the granddaughter of Raja Ali Khan, arranged mainly on diplomatic considerations by astute Khan Khanan. The conduct of the Prince had offended this important ally and only blood-relationship could heal the wound. Khan

Khanan realized the value of Raja Ali Khan in the Deccan conquest. He calculated that this wedlock was the best means to bring both together paving the way for mutual co-operation.

The advent of the Mughals had alarmed the Deccan rulers. They foresaw the fate that awaited them if the intruders succeeded in their mission. So when Chand Bibi appealed to their patriotic sentiments, they readily responded. Soon a composite force 60,000 strong, consisting of Bijapuri, Qutbshahi, Nizamshahi and Bidarshahi contingents marched towards Berar to drive the aggressors away.

The news of this alliance reached Khan Khanan at Jalna. The commander issued orders to various outposts to send their detachments to the cantonment, and proceeded to Shahpur to consult the Prince. His faithful ally Raja Ali Khan was already with his grand-son-in-law. After prolonged discussions it was agreed that Khan Khanan with some other nobles should march ahead and the Prince would follow. Accordingly the Mughal commander at the head of a composite army of Mughals, Rajputs and Khandesh soldiers pushed forward and encamped on the bank of the Godavari at Asthi.

The Deccani troops under the overall command of Suhail Khan, the Adilshahi general, had reached the town of Sonpat. When they learnt of the Mughal advance they halted, arrayed their troops in battle formation and waited for the enemy. As was their tradition, the Nizamshahi troops occupied the centre while the right and left wings were entrusted to the Adilshahi and Qutbshahi troops. The Bidarshahi contingent joined in the left wing. The Mughals too had arranged their army. The

centre was commanded by Khan Khanan himself, the right wing by Sher Khwaja and the left wing by Raja Ali Khan. The van was led by the Rajputs.

For fifteen days, save a few casual skirmishes, no major action took place. On January 26, 1597 at 9 in the morning, the Mughals crossed the knee-deep river and engaged the enemy on the opposite bank. The action started with an exchange of fire. As the day advanced the opponents drew closer. By 3 o'clock in the afternoon, the action became general. The Deccanis with their overwhelming number and superior artillery dominated the field, but the Rajputs fighting in the van stoutly maintained their ground.

Towards sunset the Mughals made a furious charge on their opponents. Despite the fact that the Nizamshahi and Qutbshahi troops fell back upon their line of defence, the Bijapuri contingent under the inspiring command of Suhail Khan maintained their ground. Their renewed charge created confusion in the Mughal ranks and many left the field.

To counteract the Bijapur artillery Khan Khanan shifted his division to a side and instructed Raja Ali Khan to follow suit. Raja Ali Khan by mistake occupied the centre just evacuated by Khan Khanan. This mistake cost him his life. He was attacked on all sides and though he fought to the bitter end he lost his life together with his faithful companions.

Having prevailed in the centre, the Deccanis mistook themselves to be the masters of the field. They plundered right and left. Laden with rich booty, they returned to their camps with no suspicion in the least about the existence of the enemy nearby.

And similar were the guesses of the imperialists too. The dark night allowed them no view of the field. They thought that the Deccanis had withdrawn, leaving them undisputed victors of the day. Consequently, they also retired to their camps, unaware of the fate that awaited them next morning.

Both the parties were soon disillusioned. Illuminations in the Deccanis' camp aroused the suspicions of the Mughals. Spies brought the news that Suhail Khan with his contingent was encamping nearby. The Mughal commander ordered his trumpets to be blown to the highest pitch to summon his scattered troops for a concerted action By dawn the imperialists were ready to face the enemy in their full strength. Suhail Khan, too, prepared for a decisive action.

The imperialists, having suffered from thirst the whole night, hastened towards the river for water. This was Suhail's opportunity. With his overwhelming force of 25,000 strong, he took the Mughals by surprise and a severer action than that of the preceding day now ensued. Finding himself outnumbered Daulat Khan Lodi, Khan Khanan's vakil, said to his master, "It is dying a useless death to fall fighting with but six hundred troopers against such odds." The Commander retorted, "Do you forget Delhi?" "If we keep up against such odds we have discovered a hundred Delhis", replied Daulat Khan.

The brave Sayyids of Barha, hearing of Khan Khanan's firm resolution said, "Well, let us fight as Hindustanis. Nothing is left but death". Having made up his mind to face the Deccanis, Daulat Khan again went to his master and said, "Their numbers are immense and victory rests with heaven; point out a place where we can

GANDHI SMARAKA GRANTHALAYA
BANGALORE-1.

find you, should we be defeated." At once came the reply, "Under the corpses."

Inspired by these heartening words, Daulat Khan fell upon the enemy. For a few hours there were terrific discharges of artillery from both sides. In the end quality prevailed upon the quantity, Suhail Khan, unble to face the determined assault of the imperialists, retreated to Shah-Durg. The Mughals, tired and worn out after long fighting, gave up the pursuit and returned to their camps.

The victory achieved by Khan Khanan on the banks of the Godavari, is an outstanding achievement of his military career. His strategy of first ascertaining the enemy's strength before actually engaging them, his tactical manoeuvring during fiery attacks and his devotion to duty against heavy odds—all these bear testimony to his generalship. The desperate valour with which the ruler of Khandesh and chivalrous Rajputs fought and died, prove the sincerity and devotion which he commanded from various sections of his followers.

If internal dissension had not stood in the way and the imperialists had followed up their victory with a united heart, the subsequent history of the Deccan would have told a different tale.

After thanks to the Giver of Victory, Khan Khanan with his usual generosity distributed all his camp belongings, worth rupees seventy five lakhs, among his troopers, leaving only a few things of the barest necessity with him. He despatched messengers to the court of the Emperor at Lahore and to the Prince at Shahpur with accounts of the newly-won battle. Having satisfied the soldiers with gifts and rewards, he despatched some of

them to Berar to reduce the forts which despite their cession by Chand Bibi, still defied Mughal authority. With a few retainers, he marched back to his cantonment at Jalna.

Khan Khanan in his letter to the Prince had proposed that if the latter would send reinforcements, he would invade the territories of Bijapur and Golkunda whose forces had suffered a severe defeat at his hands and whose surrender he considered to be inevitable. At first the Prince welcomed the idea. But machinations of his sycophants led him to change his mind. Muhammad Sadiq Khan, the Prince's guardian poisoned the ears of his ward against Khan Khanan in every way and the proposal was dropped.

Animosity between the Prince, now a puppet in the hands of his selfish guardian, and Khan Khanan had grown so deep that every action of the latter was viewed with suspicion. At the instigation of Sadiq the Prince wrote to him that he should follow up his late victory by an immediate march against Ahmadnagar. The Commander replied that in view of some strongholds still lying unreduced in Berar, it would be imprudent to launch an attack on the Nizamshahi capital. The enterprise could be undertaken more profitably next year.

Khan Khanan's pleadings were of no avail. The more he justified his stand, the more he offended the Prince. Khan Khanan's letters written to Abul Fazl at this time throw a flood of light on the dejected and helpless state of his mind brought about by the Prince's arrogant and obstructionist attitude. In his despair, the commander went even to the length of expressing his desire to become an ascetic. The Prince approached his father with letters

of complaint against the indifferent commander, requested his immediate recall and suggested the appointment of some one else to complete the Deccan conquest.

The Emperor with his usual sagacity instituted a thorough inquiry into the allegations levelled by the Prince and Khan Khanan against each other. He took both of them to task. Raja Shal-Bahan was despatched to Shahpur to bring the Prince to court and Rup Khawas to Khan Khanan.

In accordance with the Imperial summons he left his jagir for Lahore. The gracious Emperor received him cordially and Khan Khanan's explanations removed the prejudices of Akbar's mind.

After his recall from the Deccan, Khan Khanan's life at court was not happy. Besides the displeasure which he had incurred from the Emperor due to his differences with Murad, in one and the same month he suffered two family bereavements. First, his son Haidari died in an accident. The boy, dead drunk, was sleeping in a sarai. The house caught fire and consumed the unconscious lad. Three days later died Mah Banu Begam, Khan Khanan's principal consort.

During the absence of Khan Khanan, the Mughal cause in the Deccan made no headway. Prince Murad, with a view to justifying his stay, had exerted himself a little but save the reduction of a few scattered forts in Berar, had failed to achieve any success. Excessive drinking had shattered his health While marching against Ahmadnagar, he fell seriously ill. On May 2, 1599, he died at Dehbari on the banks of the Purna.

With the arrival of Abul Fazl, new vigour was infused in the Mughal attempts to conquer the Deccan. But

chronic rivalry did not allow him to make much headway. The Deccanis renewed their efforts to recover their lost territory. The party hostile to Abul Fazl at court was intriguing against him and now the prevailing situation in the Deccan demanded the presence of either the Emperor or that of a Prince.

The Emperor's choice first fell on Prince Salim. The heir, suspicious of his father's motives, showed disinclination to proceed to that distant country. Then Daniyal was selected. With weighty counsels, the Emperor saw him off at the first stage. He was entrusted with the government of the conquered territory of the south and Abul Fazl was to act as his *Ataliq* and virtual commander.

The Prince lingered on his way. The Emperor, to be nearer to the Prince and spur him to greater activity, left for Malwa on September 16, 1599 apparently on a hunting excursion. But he felt the necessity of a man who could by virtue of his talents, relations and experience, exercise control over the hopeless youth. Abul Fazl was anxious to be relieved of his onerous duties. Then who was to replace him ? The Emperor found Khan Khanan the only suitable general to accompany the Prince. He was his father-in-law, Jana Begam, Khan Khanan's daughter, having been married to Daniyal; he had a firm grasp of the Deccan situation and had made fresh promises of faithful service to the Imperial cause. Considerations such as these led the Emperor to appoint Khan Khanan once again to the Deccan as *Ataliq* and virtual Commander-in-Chief.

Proceeding post haste he soon joined the Prince. On the way news reached of Abul Fazl's intended attack on Ahmadnagar. Lately the relations between Khan Khanan

and the court historian had been embittered. Khan Khanan could not tolerate the credit of victory of the Nizamshahi kingdom going to his rival. So he induced Daniyal to restrain Abul Fazl from hasty action. The Prince, a puppet in the hands of Khan Khanan, at once sent an order to Abul Fazl asking him not to advance against Ahmadnagar and wait till his arrival. The historian received the mandate at Mungi Patan, a town on the bank of the Godavari and stopped.

From Burhanpur the party marched on. At Ahubara, they met Abul Fazl who acquainted them for three days with the latest developments in the Nizamshahi politics. As they moved ahead, they planned to besiege the fort of Ahmadnagar after the expiry of the rains. But the Emperor's anxiety for a speedy close of the Deccan affairs would not brook any delay. An immediate investment after their arrival at Ahmadnagar was decided upon.

The Nizamshahi government was distracted by factions of the Regent and her Prime Minister, Abhang Khan Habshi. The former was the actual ruler in the name of Bahadur Nizamshah. The latter, anxious to vest the entire authority in himself, was trying to capture the regent and her puppet and for this had laid siege to the fort. Khan Khanan saw a golden opportunity in the internal dissensions of the adversary. He mustered his troops and proceeded to besiege the fort.

The actual siege started on April 12 and lasted for about four months and four days. The batteries were distributed among the generals with the overall command in the hands of Khan Khanan. Chand Bibi's garrison under the valiant lady offered determined resistance.

But adverse fate awaited this valiant lady. Some

Deccani nobles headed by Juned Khan Habshi did not appreciate the sagacious policy of Chand. Forgetting the circumstances which impelled this woman to negotiate with the Mughals, they accused her of treachery. One night, while she was engaged in offering prayers, they fell upon her and put her to death.

The cold-blooded murder of Chand—the only capable leader to enforce discipline and unity among the garrison, made the Mughals' task easier. Gradually advancing their trenches, they managed to reach the edge of the moat and filled it up with sand and stones. It was not an easy job; for the moat was some forty yards broad and seven yards deep. Then they concentrated to effect breaches in the walls which were twenty-seven yards high. Several mines were run but the garrison, always alert, at once countermined them. At last the besiegers succeeded in firing a mine, and a part of the tower was demolished. The garrison tried their best to empty the unignited gun-powder but failed. The Mughals refilled it with 180 maunds of magazine powder. On August 16, 1600, under Khan Khanan's orders they set it on fire. The explosion at once blew down the famous tower known as Laila and also about thirty yards of the wall.

Through the wide breach the besiegers got into the fort. But even now the garrison would not surrender. In their last-ditch fight to defend the citadel, the Deccanis lost about 1500 men. At last unable to stem the surging tide, they capitulated. Bahadur—the boy king with all his family was taken by Khan Khanan to Asir. From there they were sent to the fort of Gwalior for lifelong imprisonment. Besides a huge treasure of valuable jewels, the imperialists obtained a noble library, 25 elephants and a

large park of artillery.

After the capitulation of Ahmadnagar fort, the impregnable fort of Asirgarh fell on January 17, 1601. Five months later, the exigencies of situation summoned the Emperor to the North. Khan Khanan with Daniyal was left alone to bring the Mughal affairs in the Deccan to their logical conclusion.

After his return to Ahmadnagar in April 1601, Khan Khanan found himself confronted with two problems. Internally his position had been rendered weak on account of mutual dissensions. The chronic disease, suppressed temporarily in the august presence of the Emperor, had broken out again, as soon as he turned his back upon the Deccan. The Imperial troops, hit hard by the soaring prices of essential commodities, were clamouring for return. Externally the situation had grown worse. Although the capital city of Ahmadnagar with its adjoining districts had fallen into Mughal hands, the kingdom as a whole had not lost its independent existence. Taking advantage of the Mughals' weaknesses, the influential Nizamshahi nobles had set up Burhan I's grandson with the title of Murtaza Nizamshah as their new king. They were busy re-occupying the conquered territory. Of these, Malik Ambar and Raju Deccani were the two most notable Amirs in the Nizamshahi kingdom with whom Khan Khanan was commissioned to deal. They joined hands against the common aggressor but clash of interests often brought them to swords. Ambar's territory being too close to the Mughal frontier and his power comparatively stronger, Khan Khanan decided first to deal with him.

The Mughal commander was aware of Malik Ambar's influence, power and prestige in the Nizamshahi kingdom.

So he despatched a strong force towards Telingana. Ambar, already on his guard, met the imperialists near Nander, close to the banks of the river Manjera. After a bloody contest he was driven off on May 16, 1601. But soon the Abyssinian chief turned back. Taking the Mughals by surprise, he recovered his lost places.

Khan Khanan realized the dangers of Ambar's growing power. So he appointed his own son Mirza Irij with a select body of five thousand cavalry to advance towards Telingana border to reinforce the Mughal captains now guarding the frontier. Ambar, getting scent of Irij's advance, marched ahead and met the Mughals at Nander, about 200 miles east of Ahmadnagar.

Soon the engagement began. Ambar's van scattered the imperialists' elephants and then attacked their van with full fury. But Mughal artillery caused havoc among the Deccanis and gave them no chance of advance. Mirza Irij made a dash upon Ambar's centre and exhibited exemplary valour in his fight against the Nizamshahi chief. The determined assault rendered the enemy's position untenable. They lost heart and left the field clear. Malik Ambar lay wounded in the field and would have fallen into victor's hands but for the gallantry and faithfulness of some of his adherents. A large booty fell to the Mughals. Mirza Irij received the title of Bahadur for his distinguished action.

Mirza Irij's victory at Nander in 1602 retrieved the Mughal prestige and extended the Mughal frontier right up to Telingana border once again. Khan Khanan was now in a better position to turn his attention to the other dislurbing element, Raju Deccani.

Malik Ambar had been defeated, but not crushed. If

the Mughal commander concentrated his army against Raju, the ambitious chief Ambar might revive hostilities. With their house divided against itself, it was imprudent to purchase enmity with another powerful chief while the first waited to extend his sway. Out of these considerations, Khan Khanan concluded a treaty with Ambar. Their respective boundaries were clearly marked out.

For the next two years, Khan Khanan was engaged mainly in the subjugation of Raju. He had suffered reverses at the hands of Abul Fazl. But the jealousies among the Mughal captains had put off his extinction. To avoid a clash, the Emperor even proposed the division of the command between Abul Fazl and Khan Khanan. But before the plan could be executed, the historian was recalled and murdered on the way by Bir Singh Bundela.

Raju's arrogance increased. In 1604, when the Prince was near Daultabad on his way to Ahmadnagar to receive the hand of Ibrahim Adil Shah's daughter, he called upon Raju to acknowledge the Mughal suzerainty and wait on him in person. The Nizamshahi chief turned down the proposal and harassed the imperialists by guerilla tactics. The intelligence of this brought Khan Khanan on the scene. From Jalna he proceeded by forced marches to join the Prince. Upon Khan Khanan's arrival the Deccanis left the field without fight.

Unable to extend his sway against the Mughals, Raju now turned against Ambar and reduced his rival to sore straits. The forlorn chief applied to Khan Khanan for succour. Anxious to maintain the balance of power between the two Nizamshahi chiefs in his own interest, Khan Khanan ordered the governor of Bir to proceed to the

support of Ambar. The Mughal cavalry overpowered Raju and drove him back to Daultabad.

Many skirmishes took place, but Raju evaded capture. Meantime Daniyal died in April 1604 and Khan Khanan had to go to Burhanpur to take over charge of the administration. The Prince's death, caused by excessive drinking struck a hard blow on Khan Khanan. In his demise he not only lost his son-in-law but also an undisputed authority in the Deccan. The Prince was only a figure-head and the ruler was Khan Khanan. He was still engaged with the Deccan problems, when Akbar died.

V

Akbar's death on October 17, 1605 and Salim's accession to the throne a week after found Khan Khanan at Daultabad. He was busily engaged in a diplomatic game of maintaining the balance of power between the two rival Nizamshahi chiefs, Malik Amber and Raju. Maasir-i-Rahimi tells us how Khan Khanan sprang a surprise on his associates by suddenly calling a general assembly, how he disclosed the sad news of Akbar's demise to the audience by appearing before them in black robes of mourning, and how next moment changing into colourful dress suited to a happy occasion he celebrated the accession of his former pupil and got the Khutba read in the new Emperor's name. The Mughal viceroy remained for some time at Daultabad. Then he proceeded to Jalnapur on his way to Burhanpur, then the capital of the Mughal Deccan.

At Jalnapur, Khan Khanan received the imperial *Farman* through Muqarrab Khan. The new Emperor, to allay the suspicions of his old *Ataliq*, had despatched this trusted servant to him 'with a message in low and high words and profitable admonitions.' In return Khan Khanan sent Daulat Khan Lodi with a letter expressing sincere loyalty and unswerving allegiance to his new master. Then entrusting the problems of Jalnapur and its adjoining area to his eldest son Mirza Irij, the Mughal viceroy came back to his headquarters at Burhanpurr.

While the presents and messages were being exchanged between Khan Khanan and the Emperor, the situation on the Deccan front was taking an alarming turn.

Daniyal's death in 1604 led to the summoning of the Mughal commander from his cantonment at Jalna to Burhanpur to succeed him as the viceroy of the Deccan. This provided Malik Ambar with his long-sought opportunity to follow his policy of aggrandisement. But before he could venture to go back upon his terms with the Mughals, he proceeded to finish first with Raju. He besieged the fort of Daultabad and reduced his rival to a sorry plight. Raju, finding no other alternative, applied to the Mughal viceroy for succour. This was what Khan Khanan had waited for. The appeal found a ready response. But on his arrival at Daultabad Khan Khanan acted to the surprise of both the parties, as an arbitrator and prevented the two from attacking each other. After a treaty had been concluded, Khan Khanan retired to Jalna.

This was a great diplomatic achievement. Long experience in dealing with Ambar had warned Khan Khanan against taking any armed action against that popular and enterprising chief. Such an action would be scandalous when he was on the friendliest terms with the Mughals. But his ambitious designs had to be checked to maintain the balance of power between the two rivals. If he had maintained neutrality, his own position would have been rendered untenable after some time. So by his interference not with arms but with counsel, he achieved his object. Raju was saved from annihilation, the treaty with Ambar remained unbroken and the balance of power which resulted from the recent settlement, secured the Mughal frontiers for a time.

But this diplomatic victory could not avail Khan Khanan for long. Khusrau's revolt in 1606 and the

siege of Qandahar (1606-1607) by the Persian king Shah Abbas Safvi, tied up the entire resources of the Imperial government in the north-west. The Deccan front suffered neglect for two years. Malik Ambar, taking advantage of this opportunity, proceeded once again against his rival at Daultabad, stormed his citade and captured Raju and overran his territory in 1607. Next he turned against the Mughals. Dissensions among the imperialists made any concrete action impossible. The adventurous chief moved from one strategic position to another, capturing the outposts on his way. He soon succeeded in subjugating much of the territory, which had been occupied by the Mughals. The Mughal viceroy was reduced to sore straits. Discomfiture stared him in the face.

Khan Khanan's failure to stem the tide of Ambar's onrush may be ascribed partially to his own doing. It is true that he received whole-hearted and loyal support neither from his captains nor from the Emperor, who concentrated his attention more on the northwest where his very crown was at stake. But in 1605 the same resources which had kept Ambar at bay so long were still at the disposal of the commander-in-chief. It might be the result of his own inactivity to make himself indispensable in the south. The suspicion of Jahangir seem to have been actually lingering in Khan Khanan's mind. He could feel secure in his command only when the situation would make his presence on that strategic border imperative.

The sweeping successes of the Deccanis alarmed the Mughal government at Agra. To the relief or grief of the viceroy in 1608 an Imperial *Farman* reached Khan

Khanan at Burhanpur summoning him to court. The anguage of the order was diplomatic. The Emperor had expressed surprise at the strange conduct of his old *Ataliq* for unusual delay in offering his personal congratulations on his former ward's accession to the Timurid throne. But in fact he wanted to recall the suspicious viceroy. A hint was enough leaving Irij in charge of the Deccan affairs and with him the rarities of the south, Khan Khanan soon left for the imperial court at Agra.

A touching scene was enacted when Khan Khanan overwhelmed with emotion at the sight of his pupil, lost all sense of dignity and fell down at his feet. The gracious Emperor at once raised his head from the ground and clasping him in a warm embrace, kissed his face. Later, recording the incident in his Memoirs, Jahangir wrote "Delight and happiness had so overpowered him that he did not know whether he came on his head or his feet." Then followed the lavish offerings of which the jewels alone were valued at thirty lakhs of rupees.

Khan Khanan's apparent sincerity and fidelity won over his royal master. With more disquieting news from the Deccan front, the alarmed Emperor looked anxiously to his veteran generals. Councils were called and consultations held, but no action could be decided upon. Astute Khan Khanan took the opportunity and impressed the Emperor with his attractive plans. In a written undertaking, he stated that if in addition to the force already assigned to the Deccan, twelve thousand cavalry with ten lakhs of rupees were given to him, he would bring the southern affairs to a successful close in the

course of two years. In case he failed to complete his task within the stipulated period, he should be treated as a defaulter.

The proposal caught the Emperor's imagination. Orders were issued for compliance with Khan Khanan's demand. The general once again proceeded southward to assume the supreme command and to preside over the destiny of Mughal affairs in that quarter. His stay at court had lasted for three months twenty days.

On his arrival at Burhanpur, Khan Khanan found the situation alarming. His absence had provided Ambar with his fondly-hoped for opportunity to wipe out the Mughals from the Nizamshahi territory. Adilshah too had joined hands with him. Thus united, the Deccanis had struck a severe blow at the divided imperialists and the prestige of the Mughal arms had suffered heavily almost on all sides.

The Mughal commander acted promptly. Leaving Burhanpur, he marched on to Jalnapur and despatched a strong detachment under Jahangir Beg to Paithan to enable the latter to clear his Jagir of the Deccani rebels. The Mughal captain fought bravely, but the Deccanis in overwhelming numbers overpowered him. Khan Khanan next deputed his son Darab Khan to Jahangir Beg's relief, but he too, could only escort back the distressed captain to Jalnapur, leaving Paithan in the hands of the Deccanis. The commander who had himself followed Darab along with his eldest son received the bad news while on the way.

Malik Ambar was flushed with success. He marched on to the imperialists' cantonment at Jalnapur. But before he could reach the place, Khan Khanan had

already sent his son Mirza Irij in advance to counteract the enemy's design. Having failed in their surprise move, the Deccanis encamped at Kolangam, about 16 miles from Jalnapur. Irij with his brother Darab attacked the enemy in his own camp. A fierce battle ensued. Ambar offered brave resistance. But finding the odds too heavy against him, he deserted the field.

But this partial success failed to provide an effective check to Ambar's flood-like onrush which had swept over the Mughals on so many fronts. Reinforced with Bijapuri contingents, he marched against Ahmadnagar, invested the fort and reduced the Mughal commandant Khawja Beg Mirza Safvi to extremities. Supplies were cut off, roads were blocked and the imperialists were harassed. Scarcity to the extent of famine rendered the commander's position at his cantonment untenable, and the guerilla tactics of the Deccanis left him with no choice but to retire to Burhanpur. Here he hoped to recoup his strength and then make fresh attempts to suppress, Ambar. Jalnapur, thus vacated soon fell to the enemy.

The news of the Mughal reverses on the Deccan border upset the Imperial Government. Various causes were attributed to this, the chief being the lack of co-operation among the imperialists. With a view to securing more harmony and better obedience to orders, the Emperor decided to send one of the Princes there. The choice fell on Parvez. Towards the close of the year 1609, the Prince with Asaf Khan as his guardian left for the Deccan to supersede Khan Khanan in supreme command as well as in the governorship of Khandesh and Berar.

Early in 1610, Parvez reached Burhanpur. But even his presence could not bring any appreciable change. The Mughal captains still indulged in mutual recriminations. Ambar's forces swelled everyday and harassed the Mughals everywhere. The siege of Ahmadnagar had exhausted the provisions and the patience of the garrison, and Khan Khanan's petition to the Emperor for further assistance still awaited response.

Asaf Khan, realising the gravity of the situation and the Prince's incapacity to control it, suggested the Emperor's personal presence on the scene. Jahangir considered the proposal and asked his advisers for their frank opinion. Khan Jahan Lodi, the son of Daulat Khan Lodi, deprecating the plan, offered his own services instead. His pleadings that the majority of the nobles had already been deputed there and the Emperor's presence was not essential, found a ready acceptance. The favourite general accompained by veterans left Agra 'to set the Deccan right'.

But before Khan Jahan could reach the scene, the imperialists had suffered further reverses. Khan Khanan, during the rains in 1610, planned a surprise attack upon the enemy. Issuing from Burhanpur with the Prince's reinforcement, he made a dash into the Nizamshahi territory and attempted to take Ambar's force unawares. But as luck would have it, his extensive plan ended in desperate failure. The Nizamshahi chief was conscious of his incapacity to meet the overwhelming imperialists in the open field and the suitability of guerilla tactics to the physical geography of the theatre of war. So he avoided pitched fights. He lured them into wrong paths among the rugged hills and inaccessible passes of Balaghat

(The uplands) and then harassed them by cutting off supplies. His Maratha cavalry, notorious in history for their predatory mode of warfare, combined with Bijapuri auxiliaries, plundered and harassed the Mughals at every conceivable opportunity. Provisions were exhausted and famine set in. Starvation took a heavy toll of men and cattle. Nothing but ruin stared them in the face. Worst of all, Khan Khanan received no support or co-operation from his lieutenants and only a loud chorus of condemnation greeted him in his distress. He was accused of treachery, rashness and incapacity. His plans were thwarted, his proposals laughed at. Under the circumstances, the only relief to him was retreat. But that too was not easy. At last driven to despair he was constrained to sign a disgraceful treaty with Ambar and withdraw to Burhanpur.

Khan Khanan's retreat also brought about the capitulation of the Ahmadnagar fort. The long-drawn and close investment of the fort had reduced the garrison to sore straits, but the spirited and inspiring command of Khwaja Beg Safvi had maintained their morale high. He was still for holding out, but when the intelligence of Khan Khanan's retreat reached the garrison, they lost every hope of relief. Their store of provisions had already been consumed, and they could keep up the hitherto unbroken resistance only in the teeth of starvation. They pressed the commandant for surrender, but the brave Persian pacified them. But how long could the emotional appeal sustain them ? The fort was surrendered on the only condition of safe conduct to Burhanpur.

Khan Khanan's surprise attack in the rains, his negligence to take adequate supplies for his forces with him

and his failure to send immediate relief to the hard pressed garrison at Ahmedabad have been subjected to criticism by historians both medieval and modern. Even Jahangir does not spare him from blame. He has been accused of rashness, treachery and deliberate attempts to undermine the Mughal prestige in that quarter. But on closer examination of circumstantial evidence, most of these accusations would be found baseless.

Khan Khanan made a dash only because he wanted to take the Deccanis by surprise. If he had waited for the advent of a more favourable season, the enemy would have got time to muster his forces in larger numbers. Then Parvez's reinforcement would have proved inadequate to meet the guerilla bands of the Deccanis. With the arrival of the Prince and his party, the commander was in a better position to take the offensive. Had he delayed the initiative would have passed to the foe. Secondly, the stipulated period of two years for bringing the Deccan affairs to a successful close was soon to expire. Had he not acted rashly, his boasts would have proved empty. Already force commanded by rival nobles was on the way to south. Any general, to keep his word and prestige, would have acted in a similar way. Thirdly, Khan Khanan did not take adequate supplies with him only because he was assured of unbroken assistance by his associates from the base. He hesitated at the start but the captains persisted and he had to yield. It was the deliberate attempts of the nobles, most of whom were nearly equal in ranks, to discredit their rival who wielded greater influence with the Prince. Finally, if Khan Khanan was treacherous to the Mughal cause, why was he entrusted with the Deccan command again and again, by Jahangir ? The later frank-

ly writes in his memoirs that 'although this appeared incredible, at last this impression was left upon his mind.' In fact his ears were constantly poisoned by the jealous nobles. The hypocrite Khan Jahan, then in the best books of Jahangir who had entitled him his 'Farzand', was anxious to take up the supreme command. He represented to the Emperor that reverses on the Deccan front were due to the treachery of the commander. The Emperor out of his weakness for his 'Farzand' took his words at their face value and never cared to inquire into the basis of the allegations.

In short, Khan Khanan's failure was due to the mutual jealousy of the Mughal chiefs. But it must be admitted, Khan Khanan in launching a surprise attack upon the enemy in the height of rains, committed a great blunder in generalship. His self-complacency and false sense of prestige made him blind to the fact that his foe, expert in the predatory methods of warfare, had greater mobility. Mughal cavalries were no match to the light Maratha horsemen in the hilly tracts of the Deccan. Even if he had received loyal co-operation, it is doubtful whether he would have succeeded.

The nobles associated with Khan Khanan in the Deccan command had already represented to the Emperor that recent reverses of the Mughals were due to the commander's incapacity, rashness and treachery. On his arrival, Khan Jahan also joined in these accusations. He wrote to his royal master that if the subjugation of the Deccan was to be completed, either Khan Khanan should be left entirely alone in that command or he should be recalled and Khan Jahan should be appointed in his place. His suggestion received acceptance. The supreme command

of the Deccan was given to Khan Jahan, and Mahabat Khan was deputed to inquire into the disasters and escort the fallen general to the Imperial court.

Mahabat Khan performed his duties promptly. Taking Khan Khanan along with him, he returned to Agra and reported to the Emperor. But Jahangir had grown so callous to his old *Ataliq* that he was not permitted entry into the capital city for some days. When at last he was allowed an audience, the Emperor received him with every mark of coldness. Irij and Darab followed their father soon, but they were treated differently. In recognition of their meritorious services, they were honoured with lavish rewards and presents. Mirza Irij was dignified with the title of Shah Nawaj Khan and Darab was favoured with the fief of Ghazipur.

Khan Khanan remained for some time at court, passing his days in anguish and disfavour. He was given a jagir in the subah of Agra in the sarkars of Kalpi and Kanauj with instructions to crush the rebels and restore order.

The change in command failed to ameliorate the sorry state of the Deccan front. Bitter feelings still reigned supreme. Even the renowned and trusted generals could not bring about any marked improvement in the situation.

The depressed Emperor made up his mind to take up the command in person and once again he gave up the idea. But the problem of the Deccan had to be solved. He had deputed the best of generals with the best equipped divisions. Yet the imperialists had failed to adapt themselves to the guerilla tactics of the Nizamshahi chief. His awareness of military incapacity and the counsel of sychophants would not allow the Emperor to take up the command. What was to be done? The anxious Empe-

ror consulted his friends and asked them to suggest a person who could by his capacity and experience retrieve the prestige of the Mughal arms.

Now every one realized the value of discredited Khan Khanan. In a council called to consider the Deccan situation was one Khwaja Abul Hasan with a first hand information of the state of affairs in the Deccan. He had just returned after making enquiries. He represented that no one had a firmer grasp of the Deccan problems and no one was better fitted to solve them than Khan Khanan. The majority seconded him and the Emperor agreed. The disgraced general was called from his fief and honoured with lavish and high promotions. Once again he was appointed the supreme commander of the Deccan campaign.

The period of two years during which Khan Khanan stayed in the north as a disgraced general is one of the best interludes of that busy life. He had the time and company to compose his immortal poems in Hindi. Some of his couplets, the real outpourings of a poetic heart, describe the feelings of charitable Rahim when he had nothing to offer to his ever-increasing number of dependants. Persistently pressed by beggars even in that state of poverty, he would feelingly say to them:

"ए रहीम दर दर फिरहिं, मांगि मधुकरी खांहिं ।
यारो यारी छोड़िए, वे रहीम अब नाहिं ।।"

This Rahim is no more the former Rahim, hence friends, leave his company. He goes now begging here and there and lives only on "*Madhukari*".

But the beggars would not let him alone. At last

pressed hard, he sent one of them to Raja of Rewa with this couplet:

"चित्रकूट में रमि रहे, रहिमन अवध नरेस ।
जापर विपदा पड़त है, सो आवत यहि देस ।।"

"The king of Oudh (Ram, the incarnation of God) sought refuge in Chitrakut. Everyone on whom calamity befalls comes to this country."

The Raja felt flattered by the poetic allusion and is said to have given one lakh of rupees to the beggar. It was probably during this interval that Rahim composed some of his famous 'Barawais' of 'Bhakti Ras' in Hindi and sent them to Tulsi Das.

After his arrival at Burhanpur, the Mughal Commander followed a cautious policy. The lessons learnt at a heavy price in the past had warned him against taking action until his position was secure. If he was to succeed, he must first set his own house in order. He fully realized that the disasters and failures of the imperialists could not be attributed so much to the genius and power of Malik Ambar as to their own mutual jealousies and dissensions. If he could put up a united front supported by his associates heartily he could bring Ambar to his knees in no time. Fortunately for him, the angel of Death relieved him of most of his rivals such as Asaf Khan, Jafar Beg, Amir-ul-Umra and Man Singh who died one after another. By the transfer of Khan Azam to Mewar front at his own request, the field was fully cleared for him.

Khan Khanan's star was in the ascendant. Freed

partially from internal rancours he turned his attention against the enemy and found them torn by their own factions. A secret plot organized by some discontented Rajputs to assassinate Malik Ambar and seize power by force had exposed the unpopularity of this strong ruler. Taking advantage of the situation, the Mughal Commander applied all his diplomatic skill to inflame the internal animosities of his foes. Consequently some of the powerful nobles of the Nizamshahi kingdom deserted their master and joined the Mughal camp.

Meantime the Emperor had despatched reinforcements to the Deccan front. The party included some of the most renowned captains the empire could boast of. They had to proceed to Burhanpur and effecting junction with the Commander-in-Chief, they had to act in harmony and concord in reducing the foe. An order was sent to Khan Khanan that he should exert his utmost to conquer the Deccan in concert with these nobles.

Encouraged by the promised co-operation of the Deccani deserters and reinforced by his two brothers, Mirza Shah Nawaz marched upon Khirki, then Nizamshahi capital where Malik Ambar was meditating upon the expulsion of the Mughals from the Nizamshahi territory. He had already concluded alliances with his neighbours under the terms. Bijapur, Golkunda and Barid Shah all had contributed to his army. Now getting intelligence of Shah Nawaz's advance towards Khirki, he despatched a contingent of fifteen thousand horsemen under his trusted commanders to harass the Mughals.

Shah Nawaz was prepared for this. As he advanced beyond Jalna and heard of the enemy's intended opposition he despatched his younger brother Darab Khan

with a detachment to meet the foe! The hostile troops sighted each other and a bloody battle ensued. Unable to stem the tide of Darab's attack, the Deccanis fled.

The intelligence of this and other reverses upset Malik Ambar. Now he had no alternative but to face the Mughals himself. Consequently at the head of the confederate army, he marched to meet the imperialists. He reached Roshangaon where the Mughals with their scanty number of two thousand men had taken positions to face the Deccanis. The centre was commanded by Shah Nawaz while the left and right wings were entrusted to the brave Rajputs and Turkomans.The van was led by Darab Khan. Malik Ambar's composite force consisting of 40,000 cavalry, 500 war elephants and the same number of artillery, was under the overall command of the Nizamshahi chief.

The opposing forces sighted each other and from 3 o'clock in the afternoon a fierce battle ensued. The Deccanis, placing their elephants in front, made a fierce attack on the Mughal van. The terrific discharges of artillery caused havoc among the opposite ranks. As the day advanced, the fight assumed fierce proportions. In the end, Darab, the commander of the Mughal van, broke through the enemy's barrier. Supported by Bir Singh Bundela from the left and Mirza Safvi from the right, he made a dashing charge. The Deccanis, though superior in numbers, could not stand their ground against such vehement attack, and their van was scattered and disorganised. Taking advantage of the confusion, Darab pushed ahead and fell upon the centre.

This was the most critical phase of the battle. For two hours, the brave men from both sides proved their mettle. At last the imperialists prevailed. Ambar, find-

ing his defences collapsing, withdrew from the field.

The decisive victory gained by Shah Nawaz at the battle field of Roshangaon in February 1616 is significant. Not only did it retrieve the prestige of Mughal arms but it also struck a blow at all the Deccan powers. For the time being there was no strength left in any Deccan chief to raise his head against the Mughals.

But this victory could not achieve anything lasting. Imperialists failed to profit from Ambar's defeat and did not follow up their success. Mutual dissensions and selfish considerations never allowed them to form a united front. All plans of Khan Khanan were thwarted by his colleagues and his every proposal was looked at with suspicion. He was openly accused of being partisan to the Deccanis from whom he received a pension.

Malik Ambar was not the man to miss an opportunity. Recovering from the shock of reverses, he busied himself in making his position strong as before. His astute diplomacy and the persuasions of Adilshah of Bijapur brought back to him the nobles who had lately deserted him. Then he turned against the Mughals and taking advantage of their divisions, he again embarked upon his policy of aggrandisement.

The disquieting news from the Deccan alarmed the Emperor. He now realized that unless there was a strong hand, the Deccan problem could not be solved. The greatest nobles of the state had failed to achieve that unity of purpose, and Prince Parvez, an inexperienced youth of twenty-five was merely a tool in the hands of Khan Khanan. With all his pride and ambition, he had singularly failed in his task and remained a helpless witness of the situation over which he was expected to have full

control. Even a foreign visitor like Sir Thomas Roe could easily notice the fact that the Prince ruled in name only and the actual power lay in the hands of Khan Khanan.

Prince Khurram, the hero of Mewar and the greatest favourite of the Nur Jahan Junta, was considered to be the fittest man to bring the Deccan War to a triumphant conclusion. Accordingly orders were issued investing supreme command in the hands of Khurram. Prince Parvez was transferred to the province of Allahabad. The Junta also proposed the recall of Khan Khanan. But the Emperor in his second thoughts gave up the idea. He now decided to move his headquarters to Mandu in Malwa, which due to its proximity to the Deccan would provide him with better facilities for giving necessary support and instruction to Prince Khurram's army.

At last towards the close of the year 1616, Khurram left for the Deccan elevated with the title of 'Shah Buland Iqbal', and loaded with unprecedented honours and presents. When he reached the left bank of the Narmada, Khan Khanan with his colleagues came forward to receive and conduct him to Burhanpur which he entered on March 6, 1617.

The Emperor, in his anxiety to strengthen the hands of the Prince, had already appointed a select force of trusted nobles with him. And now to win over Khan Khanan he instructed the Prince to marry the daughter of Shah Nawaz Khan. The wedding which took place on August 23, 1617 was dictated by diplomatic considerations. The matrimonial alliance contracted with the most powerful man in the Deccan command would pave the way for his smooth sailing. It was the best means of securing the

ungrudging help of a noble most familiar with a region which promised to be the Prince's future field of activities. The results justified the expectations. This connection changed the entire course of events and the Prince with the enthusiastic support of Shah Nawaz and Khan Khanan, found it easier to bring the knotty Deccan affairs to a speedy close.

The Prince started his diplomatic negotiations with all the three Deccani chiefs who were wise enough to read the signs of the times. Khurram's presence with the entire resources of the Empire at his command, his matrimonial relations with Khan Khanan and the proximity of the Emperor to their respective territories had alarmed them greatly. They realized that their independence could be preserved only through negotiations and not through armed conflict. Therefore, when Mughal envoys approached them with specific offers of peace on payment of tribute and restoration of lost territory, they readily agreed. The Adilshah of Bijapur, eager to show his loyalty to the Emperor, personally waited on the Prince with a lavish present. The Qutbshah followed his neighbour and sending a similar present he offered submission to the Prince. Now Ambar had no alternative. He returned to Balaghat and promised to surrender Ahmadnagar and other forts. Once again he had to withdraw to his previous position.

Having achieved his object, the Prince now turned his attention towards the consolidation of the ceded territory. He found no one better equipped with experience and grasp of the complexing problems of the Deccan than old Khan Khanan. Consequently he was appointed the viceroy of Khandesh, Berar and Ahmadnagar and Shah

Nawaz Khan was stationed in the ceded territory. Now leaving a strong army for the defence of the Mughal Deccan, Khurram left Burhanpur. Accompained by a large train of nobles, he paid his respects to the Emperor on October 12, 1617 at Mandu.

After the return of the Prince, Khan Khanan made vigorous attempts to reorganize the administration. His son Shah Nawaz and other officers in-charge of various outposts exerted themselves fully. For two years Malik Ambar, despite his repeated efforts, could not raise his head in opposition.

In the thirteenth year of Jahangir's region, while the Imperial camp was passing by near the Sarkar of Khandesh on their way back from Gujarat to Agra, Khan Khanan with the permission of the Emperor, took the opportunity of paying his respects to his royal master and had an audience with him at Ghati Chanda between Ujjain and Ranthambhor (September 1618). The Emperor received him with all marks of royal favour, honoured him with costly presents and promoted him to the *Sat Hazari* rank. Khan Khanan returned to Burhanpur to resume his duty in the Deccan.

VI

THE YEAR 1619 marks the beginning of the saddest chapter of Khan Khanan's career of seventy-two years. His achievements during the reigns of Akbar and Jahangir had won him many favours and honours. But fate had willed an inglorious end to a glorious life. After his return from the court, Khan Khanan found his eldest son Shah Nawaz in an almost hopeless condition on account of excessive drinking. Jahangir had cautioned Khan Khanan about the indulgence of his son and had offered his personal care if Khan Khanan found the boy incorrigible. Despite the best medicines and care of expert physicians, the patient showed no sign of improvement. At the age of 33 the promising youth died. The Emperor mourned the loss immensely.

Hardly had old Khan Khanan recovered from the shock when his third son Rahmandad also died. In his case the father could not even have the satisfaction of having given him the best possible nursing. The end was hasty and sudden. While the boy was convalescing after an attack of fever, he heard of Darab's march against the Deccanis to foil their surprise attack. Moved by a sense of valour, he forgot his weak state of health and rushed to the side of his brother. The insurgents were driven off and the victors returned. But sudden exposure proved fatal. Jahangir speaks eloquently of his skill in sword playing.

The Emperor, sent messages of condolence to his old *Ataliq*. The *Panch Hazari* Mansab of Shah Nawaz

was added to the ranks of his sons and brothers. Darab, now promoted to 5000 personnel and honoured with lavish presents, was sent back to his forlorn father to take charge of the governorship of Berar and Ahmadnagar in the vacancy caused by the death of his eldest brother.

The Emperor was in distant Kashmir enjoying the natural scenery of the valley. Prince Khurram was busy with all his troops in the conquest of Kangra in far off Punjab. Malik Ambar saw his opportunity. The old wrangles and recriminations among Mughal captains made his task easier and he succeeded in recovering the entire territory which he had ceded two years earlier.

Reduced to a sorry plight, Khan Khanan made a bid to check the enemy's advance. He contrived to bring the foe to a pitched fight. The Mughal cavaliers attacked the enemy's camp, plundered their baggage and after a severe contest scattered them in different directions. But we sooner did they turn their back, than the Deccanis began to harass the Mughals.

Now Ambar made Balapur the main target. During four months of stay, scarcity of provisions had reduced the imperialists to sore straits and led to numerous desertions. Representations from the Commander-in-Chief failed to get any success from the Emperor. Despairing of relief, imperialists decided to retreat to their last stronghold at Burhanpur. The Deccanis pursued them. Reaching Burhanpur, they besieged the walled city and devastated the country round it.

The position of Khan Khanan was precarious. The Deccanis had crossed the Narmada and devastated the surroundings of Mandu itself. The imperialists had stood

the miseries of a protracted siege for six months, but how long could the limited store of provisions keep their body and soul together ? In this height of distress they heard of Khurram's reappointment to the Deccan command for the second time.

In December 1620, Prince Khurram at the head of a large army marched south to the relief of beleagured imperialists. They reached Mandu and in co-operation with the local troops gave chase to the Deccanis across the Narmada. Then the victors waited on the southern bank of the river, for the arrival of the main force. When the Prince came, the whole army advanced towards Burhanpur.

The name of Prince Khurram was enough to strike terror in the enemy's heart. When they heard of his approach, they withdrew southward. The Mughal troops reached Khirki, the new capital of the Nizamshah and would have caught the puppet king along with his family but for the timely action of Ambar who have moved them to a safer place—the fort of Daultabad, just the previous night. The city was occupied after feeble resistance and the imperialists demolished the whole city with all its beautiful and decorated buildings.

In May 1621, an imperialist detachment under the overall command of Darab Khan left for Daultabad. But they did not make any appreciable progress. Unable to cope with guerilla tactics, they gave up their attempt on Daultabad and turned towards Ahmadnagar where Khanjar Khan, despite the miseries and privations of a prolonged siege, had resisted the enemy. Malik Ambar employed all his skill to foil their attempts to bring relief to the besieged garrison, but Khurram was

too clever to be easily deceived. His plans unnerved Ambar and he offered terms of peace. The siege of Ahmadnagar was raised, the territory previously occupied by the Mughals was restored and the three leading Deccani powers had to pay tribute. After the ratifications of the treaty, the Prince busied himself in administrative affairs at Burhanpur.

Prince Khurram was the only man who could solve the complicated problems of the south. No other general, however great, could check the onrush of restless Ambar. Khan Khanan had failed, though there were weighty reasons for that. In the death of Shah Nawaz he had lost one of his ablest commanders. Mutual jealousies never permitted him concerted action. His sincerity was doubted and his plan thwarted. Non-cooperation stared him in the face everywhere. Under the circumstances, no general could hope to succeed.

Hardly had the Prince concluded his task on the Deccan border, when circumstances forced him to raise a standard of revolt against the Empire whose glory in his father's time rested mainly on his achievements. Khan Khanan was called upon to take one of the most fateful decisions of his career. He meditated on the problem deeply and in the end decided to take up the side of Khurram.

Now what were the considerations that led Khan Khanan to adopt this course ? Khurram was the legal and most competent heir to his father's throne. His eldest and popular brother Khusrau, once the centre of hopes of many great nobles, was dead. His second brother Parvez, though able, and ambitious, had already fallen prey to intemperance and his failure in the Deccan

had convinced Khan Khanan of his incapacity and worthlessness. He was far away and even if he wished, he could not support his cause effectively. The failing health of the Emperor and machinations of Nur Jahan had alarmed him. In case the latter succeeded in enthroning Shahriyar, his fate as well as that of the Empire would be doomed. He could not so easily forget and forgive the repeated disgraces and insults heaped upon him by her Junta. In the second place, Khurram was his grand son-in-law. It was but natural for Khan Khanan to side with his relative. His achievements in his father's time promised a bright prospect for the Empire. In Khurram he saw not only his selfish gain but the welfare of the state.

Before the Prince broke into open revolt, he had sent representations to his father to justify his actions. But Jahangir's ear had been so poisoned that he saw hostility in every move of the Prince. The more he clarified his stand, the more prejudiced he became.

Despairing of justice by peaceful means, the Prince in the company of Khan Khanan marched northward to get it by force of arms. On the way negotiations for peaceful settlement started and once more they failed. At Fatehpur Sikri, they found the gates closed on them. The party marched along the banks of the Jamuna with eyes on Delhi and encamped at Bilochpur.

Nur Jahan, fully alive to the gravity of the situation, made elaborate preparations to meet the crisis. She had recalled Prince Parvez with all his forces from Bihar. The chivalrous Rajputs were her loyal supporters. Raja Bir Singh Deo had once again come to save his benefactor. The hostile Khan Azam was won over with lavish

promotions. Above all Mahabat Khan, one of the greatest generals of the Empire, had been called from Kabul and was now the chief commander of the imperialists.

On March 28, a skirmish resulted in the victory of an imperialist detachment. The next day a deadly and decisive battle ensued. The rebels sustained the combat till the approach of darkness but then their courage gave way. Finding the situation too hot, they retreated towards Mandu the same night.

Defeated and dejected, the rebels found shelter in the fort of Mandu and there the Prince reorganized his forces to face the imperialists. The pursuers, led by Prince Parvez and Mahabat Khan, crossed the Ghati Chanda, only to be harassed by a band of light Maratha horse. But imperial commander foiled the attempts of the rebels to encircle his movement. His diplomatic skill was no less than his military tactics. His secret efforts to win over some of the supporters of the rebel Prince bore fruit. A detachment sent by Khurram to serve as vanguard to his main force proved treacherous when it came to an encounter near Kaliyadah; the commander deserted to the imperialists.

Unable to stand his ground, the bewildered Prince retreated further south in a vain hope to seek refuge somewhere in the impregnable forts of the Deccan. But misfortune bred more desertions. Hardly had the Prince heaved a sigh of relief from the affairs of Zahid Khan whose treacherous letter to Mahabat Khan offering his desertion had been intercepted and dealt with strongly when one of his confidential servants captured Khan Khanan's messenger carrying a letter to the Imperial commander

with the following verse on the margin :

"A hundred persons are watching me
Otherwise I'd fly from discomfort."

Shocked and surprised, the Prince called Khan Khanan and his sons to his quarter and showed them the letter. The old commander put forth lame excuses to explain away his conduct but to no purpose. Shah Jahan reprimanded him severely and ordered him to be kept under his surveillance near his own quarters, Darab and his brothers too had to share the fate of their father.

With these captives, Shah Jahan left for the fort of Asir. The commandant tempted by the prospect of high promotion surrendered the stronghold. The capture of this strategic fort brightened the future of Shah Jahan for the time being. But the discomfiture of his partisans in Gujarat compelled him to seek his fortune elsewhere. The Prince first proposed to imprison the captives in that stronghold, but changed his mind. He took them along with him to Burhanpur.

While at Burhanpur, the Prince sought in vain, the assistance of his former antagonists among the rulers of the Deccan. Khurram's prospects now seemed gloomy in every direction. He had been routed from the north; Gujarat was lost to him; many supporters were killed or had deserted. The fidelity of those who remained behind was not beyond suspicion. So, the Prince sought reconciliation with his father. Through the son of Raja of Bundi he opened negotiations with Mahabat Khan, now encamping on the northern bank of the Narmada.

Mahabat Khan was not the man to miss the opportunity.

In reply to the Prince's message, he said that there could be no peace until Khan Khanan came in person to represent his cause. The astute commander's object in proposing this condition as a prelude to any settlement was obvious. He knew that the experienced general was the fountain head of Khurram's plans. If he could be separated from him, the rebel Prince could be brought to his knees. Jahangir admits in his Memoirs that "His sole purpose was by these means to separate from him that head of deceivers who was the ring leader of trouble and sedition." Moreover, Mahabat Khan was anxious to have the life of Abdur Rahim for the sake of the title of 'Khan Khanan'. This was a God-sent opportunity to remove the thorn out of his way.

Disloyalty of Khan Khanan had aroused suspicions in the mind of the Prince. Mahabat Khan's proposal confronted him with a perplexing problem. Finding no alternative, the Prince agreed to send Khan Khanan to the imperialists on the opposite bank. Setting him free from captivity, Khurram appointed him to represent his cause faithfully. To be sure, he made him swear fidelity on the holy Quran. Further to please his vanity, the Prince took his grand-father-in-law into his harem, brought his own wife and sons as supplicants before him and entreated him in every way to support his cause honestly and unflinchingly. The Prince said, "My times are bad, and my position difficult; I make myself over to you, and make you the guardian of my honour. You must act so that I no longer face contempt and confusion."

Khan Khanan proceeded to the imperialist camp to settle the terms of peace. It was previously arranged that Khan Khanan would stay on the southern bank of the

river and carry on negotiations by correspondence. Till now, Bairam Beg, one of the staunchest adherents of the Prince had foiled the attempts of the royalists to cross the Narmada. The trustworthy lieutenant vigilantly guarded the fords of the river. But with the start of negotiations, he became a bit slack. This gave the imperialists their long-sought opportunity. Before Khan Khanan could reach his destination, some of them, under the cover of night, crossed the river at neglected fords and took the rebels by surprise. Bewildered at this unexpected charge, Bairam's detachment fell into confusion. The imperialists scattered the rebels in different directions.

When at last Khan Khanan arrived on the bank, he found the situation beyond control. He could neither go back nor stay where he was. The imperialists would not allow him a safe return. Their treacherous attack on the unguarded rebels had doomed his mission to failure. But Khan Khanan's loss was the imperialist's gain. Taking advantage of the general's dilemma, Prince Parvez wrote to him threatening him with dire consequences, if he strove to side with the rebels and holding out attractive prospects if he were to come over to the imperialists. Mahabat Khan offered his mediation. The helpless commander succumbed to temptation. Inspite of his oaths, he crossed the river and waited in all reverence before Prince Parvez.

This conduct of Khan Khanan admits of no defence. He committed the greatest crime according to the code of moral law. To betray the cause of a forlorn and troubled Prince despite solemn oaths on the holy Quran, was an act which cannot be justified. In the face of personal risk, he threw all his promises to the winds.

Even the moving lamentations and pathetic entreaties of the harem could not induce him to die for the honour which he was expected to uphold.

Khan Khanan did what lesser men have done on such occasions. His wavering attitude can better be studied in his couplet :

"अब रहीम मुसकिल परी, गाढ़े दोऊ काम ।
सांचे से तो जग नहीं, झूठे मिलै न राम ।।"

"A grave dilemma faces me now; both acts are fraught with serious consequences. If I adhere to the truth, I lose the world and if I adopt falsehood, I fall in the estimation of the Lord."

The flight of Bairam Beg's detachment and betrayal of Khan Khanan dashed all the hopes of the Prince. In the height of rains, he crossed the Tapti and passing through the territory of his former antagonist, the King of Golkunda, he proceeded towards Orissa and Bengal. Further desertions followed but the Prince struggled on. After going through many vicissitudes of fortune, at last he heaved a sigh of relief when on November 10, 1623 he entered Orissa.

Having crossed the Narmada, Mahabat Khan joined by Khan Khanan proceeded southward. The Tapti was soon crossed and the fleeing rebels were pursued for some distance. At this time from Mahabat Khan's camp Khan Khanan made a futile attempt to entrap Khurram. He wrote to Raja Bhim, the son of Rana of Udaipur and a staunch supporter of the rebels that if the Prince would release his (Khan Khanan's) sons, he would contrive to turn back the imperialists from their

relentless pursuit. He warned that if his offer was rejected, the affairs might take a more serious turn. But the proud Rajput treated the offer with contempt. In reply he wrote that they had still five to six thousand faithful followers. If Khan Khanan attempted to approach them, not only his sons would be put to the sword but even his own life would be in danger. Once again the crafty Khan Khanan failed in his diplomacy.

After the arrangements for the administration of the ever troubled Deccan were completed and an alliance with Bijapur concluded, the imperialists with Khan Khanan left Burhanpur on March 16, 1624. They proceeded to the north-east to check the progress of the rebels. All through their march, they always pitched Khan Khanan's camp next to that of Prince Parvez. The recent conduct of the old general had made everybody suspicious about him. While the helpless captive was passing his days in anguish, he had the mortification to learn of the cruel murder of his son Darab.

On their part, the rebels had occupied Bengal. Khurram now brought out Darab from confinement. After taking solemn oaths from him for fidelity and keeping his wife, son and a nephew (a son of Shah Nawaz) as hostages for good behaviour, he appointed him governor. But he too followed the example of his father. While the Prince was at Rohtas after having suffered a severe defeat at the hands of Mahabat Khan on the Tons, he wrote to Darab Khan to meet him with all his troops at Sikrigally on the mouth of the Rajmahal pass. The viceroy of Bengal, reluctant to follow the fate of a forlorn fugitive rebel, evaded the command. He wrote in reply that the

local zamindars had arisen and held him captive and under the circumstances it was impossible for him to comply. The pretext was obvious. Darab had openly decided to desert the rebel cause and wanted time to join the imperialists.

Immediately after Darab's defection, Abdulla Khan, despite Khurram's humane instructions, put Darab's innocent son and nephew (who were hostages in his possession) to a cruel death. When, after the battle of Tons, Parvez and Mahabat Khan proceeded towards Bihar, the Prince under Imperial summons repaired to court leaving his associate in charge of the province. Mahabat Khan took the initiative, sent for Darab Khan from Bengal and procured a royal mandate that "there was no sense in keeping such a worthless fellow alive." The Viceroy was beheaded. Mahabat Khan to tease his jealous rival Khan Khanan sent his son's head to him beautifully wrapped in a napkin as a present of melon. Khan Khanan, now a helpless captive, at the sight of the head of his beloved son uttered *Tarbuz Shahidi Ast*. (True a beautiful melon has become a martyr).

The tragic end of his young son and innocent grandsons broke the heart of the old man. He had reached the climax of his misfortunes. Fate soon had compassion on him.

In March 1626, Khurram had accepted the Imperial terms. But a new danger had arisen to Nur Jahan. Mahabat Khan "the boldest and most resolute man, the foremost captain and the ablest diplomat of the Empire," till now engaged in reducing the rebel Prince, was now supporting the accession of Parvez against that of Shahriyar, the nominee of Nur Jahan. The old hostility

between the Begam and the general under the normal circumstances revived in an intensified form. The Empress saw her prospect safe only when Mahabat Khan was removed from her path. But who was to be sent against him ? She must have been the main force behind her husband in restoring Khan Khanan to favour for any emergency. A year before, under Imperial orders, Parvez had brought the fallen general before the Emperor at his court in Kashmir. Jahangir received his old *Ataliq* with cordiality and love. When Khan Khanan prostrated himself and "for sheer shame refused to raise his head from the ground" the sovereign told him that he was a victim of circumstances. "It was not in your or our power, and I feel more ashamed than you." Thereafter giving him a lakh of rupees; the Emperor restored his old tutor to his rank and title with the jagir of Malkusah in Kannauj (1625).

Khan Khanan for gratefulness to his patron engraved the following verse on his ring :

"By the help of God, the kindness of Jahangir
Has twice given me life and twice the Khan Khanan."

Nur Jahan's sagacious policy to win over Khan Khanan availed her at the right time. After Mahabat Khan's *coup-de-main* she appointed the seventy-one year old general against the rebel commander. Khan Khanan was treated with every favour. Besides the assignment of Mahabat Khan's fief to him, she gave him twelve lakhs of rupees from her treasure. But before the honoured general could proceed against his antagonist beyond the Indus, he fell ill at Lahore. . The long and anxious career had sapped his

energy. Present calamities had shattered his iron constitution. From Lahore he was brought to Delhi, but the change did him no good. In 1627, he left this world and was buried under the magnificent but incomplete mausoleum built by himself opposite that of Humayun.

VII

Rahim's place in the memory of his countrymen rests mainly on his literary achievements. There have been numerous noblemen whose military skill and diplomatic talents won them coveted places in their masters' realm, but they are soon forgotten. Abdur Rahim survives to-day because unlike most of his contemporaries he tried to win the hearts of people by sympathy and love. His contributions to the language and literature of the people, his inspiring patronage to poets and artists, and his sympathetic approach to divergent creeds distinguished him from the rest. He was one of the few in medieval history who were masters of the sword as well as of the pen (Sahib-us Saifwa Kalam).

Gifted with a flair for languages, classical and spoken, Indian and Islamic, Abdur Rahim tried his skill as a versifier in Persian, Turki, and even in Sanskrit. But his poetic genius shone best only in the different dialects that make up the Hindi of Northern India. As a translator he excelled most of his contemporaries. His letters are a proof of his mastery over Persian prose. His liberality drew to his court writers of various castes and creeds. Verses flowed freely from their pens, trying to excel each other in the description of their patron's valour and generosity.

Patronage of Hindi literature was one of the most distinctive features of the cultural policy of the Mughal Empire from the time of Humayun down to Bahadur

Shah II. Even Aurangzeb was no exception. The history of Hindi literature proves it. The golden age of Hindi literature coincides with the age of Akbar. The cultivation of Hindi poetry and poets became a fashion at the Mughal court. Akbar himself could make extempore verses. Birbal and even the dry Todarmal have some verses to their credit. But Rahim's genius in Hindi poetry had a fuller play than any other Muslim poet, writing in Hindi before or after him.

Rahim's genius was not of an epic and mystic character like that of Malik Muhammad Jayasi. Nor was his poetry a gospel of the religious revival like that of Tulsi, Surdas or Kabir. Rahim wrote on morals, tried his hand in various metres, and displayed his mastery of Hindi poetics. In this he is excelled only by a few. His *dohas* sparkle with wit and humour and his *barawais* with deep emotion and an eye for beauty in man and nature. The sentiments and ideas which find expression in Rahim's works are as fresh and appealing as they were four hundred years back. His stanzas on the ethics of life are the favoured quotations of every day conversation. Whether in public or in private, one finds Rahim's words the guiding maxims of people. Rahim's name is a household word in the Hindispeaking country-side like that of Tulsi or Kabir.

The causes of Rahim's popularity are not far to seek. He does not play only upon imagination. He knew and realized that poetry devoid of the practical side of life cannot last long. In his compositions we find a rare blending of imagination and reality. Secondly, Rahim's verses are a flow of feelings reinforced with practical wisdom drawn from his study of types of men—virtuous

and wicked —with whom he had come in contact. His poetry seems to be no simulated prose of a moralist but a revelation of his inner self and an enunciation of principles of life and conduct as a Mughal grandee. But the most important cause of his popularity is that he was perfect in all the three main dialects of Hindi, *viz.* Braj Bhasha, Awadhi and Khari Boli. As such the range of his popularity is wider than that of others who wrote in Braj Bhasha, Awadhi or Khari Boli. His rich and varied vocabulary has brought his works within the reach of the common man. His subjective and simple presentation appeals to the imagination of all, irrespective of class, creed or intellectual set-up.

Abdur Rahim's Hindi works can be broadly classified in three groups on the basis of language, theme and style. The first consists of couplets (*dohas*) mostly in Braj Bhasha. They are supposed to be seven hundred, though only four hundred and twelve are extant. They deal with *Bhakti Ras* (devotion) as well as *Shringar* (erotic sentiments). But mostly they depict the ethical side of life. His varying experiences have been woven into a charming texture of wit and colour. They are as effective as pleasing. A few examples will illustrate the fact :

"रन बन ब्याधि बिपत्ति में, रहिमन मरउ न रोइ ।
जो रक्षक जननी जठर, सो हरि गए न सोइ ।।"

"Do not cry thyself unto death (in despair and helplessness) whether thou art on the field of battle, in wilderness, on a sick-bed, or in the grip of a calamity. He who protected thee in thy mother's womb is not asleep".

"रहिमन चोट सुतीर के, चोट खाइ बच जाय ।
नैन बान के चोट ते, धनवन्तरि न बचाय ।।"

Rahim says, "One may survive a wound of the sharpest arrow ; but one pierced by the arrow of glance (of the beloved) cannot be saved even by Dhanwantari."

"खैर, खून, खांसी, खुसी, बैर, प्रीति, मद पान ।
रहिमन दाबै ना दबै, जानत सकल जहान ।।"

Rahim says, "The world knows that a good deed, a murder, love, enmity and joy, or coughing and drinking cannot be suppressed, howsoever you may try".

"तबहीं लौं जीबो भलो, दीबो होय न धीम ।
जग में रहिबो कुचित गति, उचित न होय रहीम ।।"

Rahim says, "Life is worth living only till the hand of charity is not slowed down. It is not proper to prolong life on earth in wretched condition".

The Second group of Rahim's compositions, consists of his *Barawais* (a metre of 19 units) written in the Awadhi dialects and dealing mostly with *Shringar Ras* (Love). His *'Barawai Naika Bhed'* is a standard work in the *Shringar Ras* of Hindi literature. Rahim is said to be the first poet to harness this metre to Hindi poetry.

The story as to how an incident inspired Rahim to compose poems in this metre is interesting. It is said that one of Rahim's clerks went on leave to celebrate his wedding. The period of leave expired but he did not turn up. At last when the realities of life awakened him from the slumber of his romance, he thought of

rejoining duty. Worried and hesitant, he went to give a parting kiss to his wife. The woman guessed the cause of her husband's worry and gave him the following lines to be handed over to his poet master.

"प्रेम प्रीति के बिरवा, चलेहु लगाय ।
सींचन की सुधि लीजो, मुरझि न जाय ।।"

"Having planted the tree of love, you are departing. But do not forget to water it lest it should wither away". The lines captured Rahim's heart and led to the composition of '*Barawai Naika Bhed*'.

The subject matter of *Barawai* is mostly borrowed from and in accordance with the traditions of the *Kamsutras* and *Natya Shastras* in Sanskrit. But Rahim's good taste does not allow him to cross the bounds of decency.

Besides 'love', some of Rahim's *Barawais* also deal with devotion, ethics and other topics. Like the *Padas* (lyrics) of Surdas, *Dohas* (couplets) of Bihari and *Chaupais* of Tulsi, Rahim's *Barawais* are a valued treasure of Hindi literature. Various types of *Naik* and *Naika* with their burning passions, amorous feelings and suggestive gestures have been vividly described in them. The language too, has attained a high degree of perfection. The choice of sweet and appropriate words has made them charming.

A few examples will illustrate the point :

"कौन रोग द्वै छतियां, उकस्यो आइ ।
दुखि दुखि उठत करेजवा, लगि जनु जाइ ।।"

"A woman unconscious of her approaching youth, technically known as '*Agyat-Yauwana Mugdha Naika*' feels surprised at the daily increasing size of her breasts. She apprehends that some disease has caused them to grow over her chest"

Then again about a *Praudha* (mature) *Naika* :

"भोरहिं बोल कोइलिया, बढ़वत ताप ।
घरी एक भरि अलिया, रहु चुप चाप ।।"

"The cuckoo's notes at early dawn gives pain to the beloved. She beseeches it to be quiet for an hour more."

A woman highly jealous of her *Saut* (co-wife) says :

"बालम अस मन मिलयउं, जस पय पानि ।
हंसनि भइल सवतिया, लइ विलगानि ।।"

"I had dissolved myself with my lover just as milk does with water. But my *Saut* (co-wife) like swans has separated him from me."

About devotion to his spiritual guide. Rahim says:

"पुनि पुनि वंदहुँ गुरु के पद जल जात ।
जिहिं प्रताप ते मन के, तिमिर विलात ।।"

"I bow down in all reverence at the lotus-like feet of my spiritual guide, whose flashing light dispels all the darkness of mind."

Rahim composed some of his *Barawais* even in Persian:

"कै गोयम अहवालम पेश निगार ।
तनहा नज़र न आयद, दिल लाचार ।।"

A beloved says, "How should I describe my helplessness? I never find my lover alone".

The third and the last group of Rahim's compositions consists of his poems written in metres other than '*Dohas*' and '*Barawais*'. They are in '*Ghanakshari*', '*Sawaiya*', '*Soratha*' '*Malini*' and some other metres. The language varies according to the needs of expression. Some of them are in Braj Bhasha, some in Awadhi, some in Khari Boli and some in mixed dialects. His '*Madanashtak*' composed in a language in which Sanskrit and Persian, Braj Bhasha and Khari Boli find an admirable harmony, is just the specimen to prove Rahim's command over the main dialects of his times. The subject matter of these verses varies from *Bhakti Ras* depicting the touching aspects of the Hindu religion to *Shringar Ras* describing feelingly the pangs of separation and captivating looks of beloved. An example of Khari Boli in early bloom is seen in the following stanza:

"शरद निशीथ, चाँद की रोशनाई,
सघन बन निकुंजे, कान्ह बंशी बजाई।
रति, पति, सुत, निद्रा, साइयाँ छोड़ भागीं,
मदन शिरसि भूयः क्या बला आन लागी ॥"

"At a moon-lit mid-night of autumn in the dense groves, Krishna played on his charming flute. The melody was too tempting to be resisted and the women, aroused from their sleep, left their husbands and sons and ran towards him (Krishna). What troubles this Cupid has brought about !"

"दीन्ह चहैं करतार जिन्हें सुख, सोतों रहीम टरे नहिं टारे,
उद्यम पौरुष कीन्हें बिना, धन आपुहि आवत हाथ पसारे।

GANDHI SMARAKA GRANTHALA
BANGALORE-1.

देव हंसे अपनी अपना विधि के परपंच न जात बिचारे,
बेटा भयो वसुदेव के धाम, औ दुंदुभि बाजत नन्द के द्वारे ।।"

"If the Almighty wants to bestow pleasure and happiness on any body, no one can hold them back. The riches come in abundance without any attempt or effort. The gods laugh among themselves at the mysterious ways of the creator. A son is born in the house of Basudeva but the rejoicings are held at Nanda's place."

And lastly, here is *Soratha* :

"गई आग उर लाय, आगि लेन आई जो तिय,
लागी नहीं बुझाय, भभकि भभकि बरि बरि उठे ।"

"The woman who came to take fire, has set fire to my heart. The fire of love cannot be extinguished as it sends forth flames every moment."

In short, Rahim tried his skill in most of the popular metres of his time. He did not write '*Chaupais*' evidently because he never aimed at writing epic poems for which this metre is suitable.

Rahim occupies a prominent position among the Hindi poets of Akbar's age. Very few of them can surpass this poetic genius who though born and brought up in an Islamic atmosphere, cultivated a taste for Hindi. He contributed' as much as his official capacity would permit him, to all the main branches of Hindi, *i.e.* Braj Bhasha, Awadhi and Khari Boli. He had an enviable command over them all. A critical study of his poems reveals his talent as a powerful master of the Hindi poetics. His lucid style, charming expression, choice of

appropriate words and judicious use of *Alankaras* (figures of speech) are in keeping with the rules of '*Pingalshastra*' (science of poetics). In his short but self-contained *Barawais*, more is meant than hits the ear. His classifications of various types of *Naikas* in his '*Barawai Naika Bhed*,' his vivid sketches and true penpictures of women of different castes in his '*Nagar Shobha Barnan*' and his touching couplets on morality in his '*Dohawali*' have passed on as Rahim's legacy to Hindi language and literature.

Abdur Rahim's patronage to poets and scholars is proverbial. His assemblies (Majlis) rivalled those at court in the number of poets. He himself was a better judge of poetry than his unlettered master Akbar. His fame as a prince among patrons of learning and poetry spread far and wide. Men of letters from distant countries thronged his court to receive recognition of their merit. He made no distinction of caste, creed and race and rewarded them according to their worth. He was generous to a fault. Legends have called him a *Bhoj* of his time. His weakness for self-praise led him to lavish lakhs of rupees on poets who excelled each other in singing their patron's valour and generosity. Both Persian and Hindi works abound in stories about Khan Khanan's charity and liberality.

A modern Persian scholar remarks, "The one shining orb in the horizon of literary patronage at the Mughal court and in the whole empire of Asia, is the dazzling personality of the Khan-i-Khanan who deserves a foremost place as supporter of Persian art and literature among the contemporary rulers of Persia, India, Central Asia, and Turkey. Akbar among the Asiatic monarchs was

undoubtedly eminent but his court noble, Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khanan was pre-eminent. His greatness as patron may well be realized by the compliments of Persian poets who sang his praises at the Persian court and in the face of the Shah himself.

Rahim's contribution to Persian poetry may be very insignificant quantitatively in so far as his indifference to composing Persian poems is concerned. But his efforts to bring about a literary renaissance and to add to the existing stock of Persian prose and poetry are laudable. He patronised nearly all the poets of the period, whether at the Mughal court or outside The large influx of Persian and Arabic scholars who chose to settle down in India was mainly due to him. The eminent poets of the age such as Naziri, Urfi, Zuhuri, Shakibi, Anisi, Nasri and Mazahri adorned his court. Rahim's personality was an inspiring theme for Persian poets. Poems written in his praise (Qasidas) are the best production of those authors. Urfi composed seven panegyrics in his praise of which the first grew so popular that as many as seven eminent poets composed poems in the same rhyme and metre. The Ghazal being subjective poetry, has no room for the praise of a patron, but Rahim's popularity symbolized him with an ideal beloved and many Ghazals were composed about him. Similarly, Saqinama is not a popular verse form and hardly any patron has been praised in more than one poem of this form. But it is the unique lot of Khan Khanan that seven poets composed their Saqinamas. Two of them, those of Shakibi and Nabi, are regarded as the best of the Saqinamas in Persian.

We have no authentic contemporary record about Hindi poets who wrote under the patronage of Khan Khanan. But

some of the verses and oral traditions go to prove that Rahim patronized them lavishly. Gang, the Hindi poet, composed about fifteen poems in praise of Khan Khanan. One of them pleased the patron so immensely that he awarded thirty-six lakhs of rupees to the composer. Keshav Das is said to have written his '*Jahangir Chandrika*' at the express wish of Khan Khanan's elder son, Shah Nawaz Khan. He composed a few poems in praise of Khan Khanan also. Among other Hindi poets who wrote verse in Rahim's praise, mention may be made of Jara, Mandan, Prasiddh, Hari Nath Alakuli, Tara Kavi and Mukund.

Khan Khanan's library at Ahmedabad possessed the richest collections of manuscripts. Having established in 1583, Rahim gradually added to its collection. It contained rare and interesting works on various subjects. Khan Khanan maintained a large and efficient staff who copied and corrected manuscripts, completed unfinished ones and illustrated them. The owner spared neither pains nor money to keep it uptodate and in good order. The special feature of that library was that it contained the '*Diwans*' in their own hand-writing of all the eminent poets who adorned Khan Khanan's court. Even today almost all the famous libraries in India contain some manuscripts bearing the autograph notes of Khan Khanan. These must have once belonged to his library.

VIII

Abdur Rahim Khan Khanan stands out as one of the few striking personalities of medieval India. The genius of none of the courtiers of Akbar was so versatile in war and peace, in scholarship and wit, in poetry and diplomacy as that of Abdur Rahim. Akbar was a good judge of character, an expert in picking up the jewels among men to adorn his court. He acted judiciously in including Rahim among the nine jewels of his Court.

Brought up under the eye of Akbar and in the environment of the most enlightened and magnificent contemporary court of the orient, Abdur Rahim grew up a finished courtier, an able soldier, a clever diplomat and a capable administrator on the one hand, and a lover of learning and learned men like his Imperial patron on the other.

His public morals were neither high nor below the standard of political behaviour of the nobles of his age. He was a complex character, sometimes a riddle to those who came in contact with him. He was never blood-thirsty and revengeful. He knew how to make a good friend of an enemy, or a erstwhile antagonist in arms. His was the most charming personality at court. His high sense of dignity, loftiness of aims, and vigour and charm in dealing with others made him one of the exalted nobles of the Mughal Empire.

He made no distinction between Muslims and non-Muslims. His Turkish affinities and Indian traits of character won him the unreserved affection of both the communities. None excelled the prodigal Khan Khanan

in the splendour and magnificence of his way of living, in benign charity and refinement of taste. He was a *Kibla* of the needy and resort of the distressed, sometimes even of the fugitive from the Emperor's wrath, which Rahim alone could face. He was indeed 'ocean-hearted' in his sympathies and gifts. No suppliant is known to have returned disappointed from him. He would rather borrow than turn a deaf ear to a request for charity. He was proud before his peers but affable and condescending to the humble.

Abdur Rahim had his lapses too. He was a wordly man. He did what seemed to be profitable to him under the circumstances. He had no fixed principles to live on and die for. His betrayal of the forlorn Prince Khurram despite his solemn oaths on the Quran and the entreaties and lamentations of the poor ladies, was rather degrading. His duplicity in the Deccan affairs brought against him the gravest charge of treachery more than once. His sincerity was questioned and his loyalty doubted. He was suspicious and had appointed a number of spies who informed him daily of even bazar gossip. He practised what he professed, namely, that people should injure their enemies under the mask of friendship.

Rahim's domestic life was never happy. He outlived all his sons and his principal consort Mah Banu Begam. His daughters lost their husbands while in the prime of their life. It is an irony of fact that such a generous man had to suffer these blows.

Rahim occupies a front-rank position among the military commanders of his age. Gifted as a general, he improved upon his native genius, by learning his first lessons of war under the care of Akbar. The strategy

and tactics that he learnt in the fields of Gujarat under the guidance of the greatest conqueror in the long line of Mughal Emperors, stood him in good stead. His victories over Muzaffar Gujarati, Mirza Jani and Suhail Khan Abyssinian bear testimony to his brilliant strategy, unfailing tactics and immense organizing capacity. His initiative and resourcefulness were no less admirable. Even his grey-bearded captains with all their obstructionist tactics could not make the young commander swerve from his set purpose in Gujarat. His strategic movements in the face of starvation and scarcity brought a foe of the calibre of Mirza Jani who had defied the imperial arms so long, to his knees. His personal valour and adventurous spirit inspired his comrades-in-arms to die to the last man.

The Deccan front was the graveyard of many commanders' reputation. Adbur Rahim was the only general who could keep the Mughal frontiers intact. The partial conquest of the southern kingdoms during the reign of Akbar was due to his far-reaching plans and their faithful execution. His victory in the battle of Asthi, despite the enemy's superior artillery and overwhelming number testify to his skill in tactical manoeuvring. Among the nobles of Jahangir's reign, Khan Khanan was the only man who could deal effectively with Malik Ambar. The Abyssinian Chief's policy of aggrandisement succeeded in the absence of Khan Khanan.

Khan Khanan had an immense regard for the men he commanded. He spared no pains to look after their comforts. In the event of victory, he would distribute all the belongings of his camp among his soldiers.

But Abdur Rahim lacked the commanding talents of

his father. His reverses on the Deccan border were partly due to his rashness. He was seldom prepared to stake his all for the achievement of his objective. Unlike the chivalrous Rajputs, he would risk his reputation but not his person. He could never utilize all the resources at his command. Specially during the later part of his life, he never acted with the vigour and determination which had won him victories in Gujarat, Sindh and the Deccan.

Abdur Rahim, though not lacking in valour, was a better diplomat than a soldier. His diplomacy, though no less successful in Gujarat and Sindh, shone forth in the Deccan border. At the very outset of the Deccan campaigns, he won over Raja Ali Khan, an indispensable ally, who fell under the spell of Khan Khanan so completely that he served the cause of his friend to his last breath. Among other factors, it was the diplomatic move of Khan Khanan that induced Chand Bibi to seek terms with the Mughals. He saw that his own interest as well as that of the Empire lay safe in tactful handling of the various rival elements in the Deccan. Therefore, he maintained balance of power between the rival Deccani chiefs. Had Aurangzeb been served by generals of Rahim's calibre, the Deccan would not have turned a graveyard for Mughal Empire.

In his dealings with the envious and disloyal colleagues and subordinate officers, Abdur Rahim displayed remarkable tact. Two of the princes under whom he served in the South were completely in his hands. Even prince Khurram could not make light of the advice of Abdur Rahim to whom he owed much for his remarkable success in the Deccan. His subterfuges rendered Abul Fazl's

position in Deccan untenable. Reappointments to the Deccan command prove the success of Rahim's diplomacy. Charges after charges were levelled against him, but his recall always spelt disaster for the Mughal fortunes in the south. It was only Rahim who could retrieve the loss of Mughal prestige. Even the veterans like Khan Jahan Lodi, Raja Man Singh and Mahabat Khan were no match. His diplomatic talents were bewildering to many of his age.

Abdur Rahim was not religious in the narrow sense of the term. He respected all the creeds of his country. He sang the praises of Hindu gods, advocated the efficacy of 'Ram nam' like Tulsidas and Kabir, expressed his sentimental feelings about Lord Krishna just as Surdas did and prohibited cow slaughter. But he was never an apostate from Islam. He had provided three ships named *Rahimi*, *Karimi* and *Salari*, all at his own expense, at the port of Surat to carry pilgrims to and from the holy land of Mecca. He constructed a channel from Lal Bagh about four miles away from Burhanpur to the Jumma Masjid in the heart of the city where he also built a fountain to provide water for the devotees for ablutions before offering their prayers. He consulted religious guides and received letters from orthodox Muslim preachers who reposed confidence in the sincerity of his faith.

Like his master Akbar, whose policy he followed almost in every sphere of his life, he had love for architecture. He built Fateh Bag near Sarkhej when he was hardly thirty. Lal Bagh near Burhanpur, now in ruins, is another specimen of Rahim's hobby for planting new gardens and constructing beautiful buildings. To relieve the congestion of overpopulated Burhanpur, he

founded a new town in the suburbs which he named after his master as 'Jahangir Pura'. His spacious and well furnished bathrooms were freely copied from there as models by his peers. The cities of Delhi, Lahore, Ahmedabad and Burhanpur still possess the ruins of the buildings which perpetuate the memory of their builders.

Abdur Rahim had liking for other Fine Arts too. Painters and musicians were rewarded by him. Badauni tells us that the poetic heart of Rahim always melted when he heard the sweet melodies of musicians. Pathos-producing Ragas often brought tears to his eyes. Like his royal master Jahangir, he was also a good judge of paintings.

But the most remarkable trait in Rahim's character was his love for Hindi, Hindus and Hindustan. Born of an Indian mother who belonged to a family of converted Rajputs of Mewat, he inherited a natural regard for his mother's country and mother's tongue. His association with saintly poets of Hindi increased his respect for the culture of the conquered race. He was, in the end, of this land. Ram and Rahim were one and the same for him. He drew no distinctions between Muslims and non-Muslims. In his long political career, we never come across a single incident when he defied the religious susceptibilities of anyone. He was humane and for humanity. His Hindi verses have made him immortal. Like Akbar he was 'an Indian of Indians'.

SELECTIONS FROM RAHIM'S POETRY

DOHAWALI

अरज गरज माने नहीं, रहिमन ए जन चारि ।
रनियां, राजा, मांगता, काम आतुरी नारि ॥१॥

Rahim says : these four types of persons listen neither to entreaties nor to scoldings—the queen, the king, the beggar and the woman blinded by passion.

एकै साधे सब सधे, सब साधे सब जाय ।
रहिमन मूलहिं सींचिबो, फूलहिं फलहिं अघाय ॥२॥

By concentrating on one thing everything else takes care of itself; dividing one's attention on everything, makes one lose all. Rahim says : watering the root (automatically) results in plenty of flowers and fruits.

ओछौ काम बड़े करैं, तौ न बड़ाई होय ।
ज्यों रहीम हनुमंत को, गिरिधर कहै न कोय ॥३॥

The small people do not get any credit even if they do big deeds. Nobody calls 'Hanuman' as 'Giridhar' (the bearer of a mountain which is the title given to Krishna for having lifted Gobardhan, although Gobardhan was much smaller than the mountain lifted and carried by Hanuman).

कहि रहीम धन बढ़ि घटे, जात धनिक की बात ।
घटे बढ़े उनका कहा, घास बेचि जे खात ॥४॥

Rahim says: the dwindling of wealth after swelling is something which concerns only the rich. What have they to swell or dwindle who earn their bread by hawking hay ?

कहि रहीम संपति सगै, बनत बहुत बहु रीत ।
बिपति कसौटी जे कसै, तेई सांचे मीत ॥५॥

Rahim says : in prosperity, many become intimate in many ways; but the true friends are only those who have been tested and found true in adversity.

कहु रहीम कैसे बने, बेर केर को संग ।
ये डोलत रस आपने, उनके फाटत अंग ॥६॥

Rahim asks himself : how are the plum (with its thorny branches) and the plantain (with its smooth leaves) to continue together ? The former moves hither and thither in a mood of pleasure which results in tearing of the latter's limbs (leaves).

काकी महिमा नहिं घटी, पर घर गये रहीम ।
धाय समानी उदधि में, गंग नाम भयो धीम ॥७॥

Rahim says : who does not suffer in importance by going to another's house. Ganga (the sacred river) rushed into the sea losing its identity with the result that its reputation as Ganga also suffered.

काज परै कछु और है, काज सरै कछु और ।
रहिमन भंवरी के भए, नदी सिरावत मौर ॥८॥

The position, when the work is required to be done, is somewhat different than when the work is finished (and one is no longer required). Rahim says : after the marriage rounds are completed (and the ceremony is over) the Maur (headgear of a bridegroom) is immersed into the river.

गरज आपनी आप सौ, रहिमन कही न जाय ।
जैसे कुल की कुलवधू, पर घर जात लजाय ॥९॥

Rahim says : one is reluctant to mention anything of one's own interest ; just as the bride of the family is shy of going to another's house.

चाह गई चिंता गई, मनुआ बेपरवाह ।
जिनको कछू न चाहिए, वे साहन के साह ॥१०॥

The desire is gone and the anxiety over ; the man is free from care. Those who have no wants are the king of kings.

जो रहीम उत्तम प्रकृति, का करि सकत कुसंग ।
चंदन विष व्यापत नहीं, लपटे रहत भुजंग ॥११॥

Rahim says : Bad company cannot spoil those who are (intrinsically) of most refined nature. Poison does not affect sandalwood even though it is surrounded by snakes.

तरुवर फल नहिं खात है, सरवर पियत न पान ।
कहि रहीम परकाज हित, संपति-संचहिं सुजान ॥१२॥

The tree does not eat the fruit (it produces) nor does the reservoir of water drink the water it contains. Rahim says : the wise men accumulate wealth only for the sake of others (and not for themselves).

तासों ही कछु पाइए, कीजे जाकी आस ।
रीते सरवर पर गए, कैसे बुझे पियास ॥१३॥

One can get something only from him from whom there is hope of getting anything. How can the thirsty bequest on approaching an empty tank?

दीन सबन कौ लखत है, दीनहिं लखै न कोय ।
जो रहीम दीनहिं लखत, दीनबंधु सम होय ॥१४॥

The poor look to everyone but nobody casts a glance at the poor. Rahim says : anyone who notices the poor (sympathises with them) is akin to god who is the friend of the poor.

धनि रहीम जल पंक को, लघु जिय पियत अघाय ।
उदधि बड़ाई कौन है, जगत पिआसो जात ॥१५॥

Rahim says : blessed is the water in the mud which is sipped by small creatures and quenches their thirst. What greatness is there in the ocean after it turns away the whole world thirsty ?

नैन सलोने अधर मधु, कहु रहीम घटि कौन ।
मीठो भावे लोन पर, अरु मीठे पर लोन ॥१६॥

The eyes are saline and the lips sweet. Rahim asks himself : which is inferior ? After anything saltish, a sweet thing is relished and after a sweet thing, something saltish is preferred.

पावस देखि रहीम मन, कोइल साधे मौन ।
अब दादुर वक्ता भए, हमको पूछत कौन ॥१७॥

Rahim says to himself : seeing the approach of the rainy season, the cuckoo has observed silence. Now the frogs have become the spokesmen. Who will care for us ?

बड़े पेट के भरन को, है रहीम दुख बाढ़ि ।
यातें हाथी हहरि कै, दयो दांत द्वै काढ़ि ॥१८॥

Rahim says : there is a great misery in having to fill a big stomach (as if) under the weight of this agony the elephant pushed out its twin tusks.

बड़े बड़ाई ना करें, बड़ो न बोलें बोल ।
रहिमन हीरा कब कहै, लाख टका है मोल ॥१९॥

Those who are great do not praise their greatness themselves. Nor do they indulge in tall-talk. Rahim says : when does the diamond say that it is worth a lac takas.

बिगरी बात बने नहीं, लाख करो किन कोय।
रहिमन बिगरे दूध को, मथे न माखन होय ॥२०॥

Once the reputation is spoiled it is difficult to mend howsoever one may try. Rahim says: spoiled milk does not yield butter inspite of its being churned.

BARWAI

जब तें बिछुरे मितवा, कहु कस चैन ।
रहत भर्‌यौ हित सांसन, आंसुन नैन ॥२१॥

Since my lover is separated from me, how can I find peace of mind? The heart is full of breaths and the eyes with tears.

कैसे जावत कोऊ, दूरि बसाय ।
पल अन्तरहू सजनी, रह्‌यो न जाय ॥२२॥

How can one go away and settle far away at a distance? Sajani! it is impossible to live separately even for a moment.

जबते मोहन बिछुरे, कछु सुधि नाहिं ।
रहे प्रान परि पलकनि, दृग मग माहिं ॥२३॥

Since Mohan has been separated from us we are not in our senses; the life is in the lids and the eyes on the path.

सबै कहत हरि बिछुरे, उर धर धीर ।
बौरी बांझ न जानै, ब्यावर पीर ॥२४॥

On separation from Hari, everybody asks me to keep patience at heart. A sterile woman does not know the pains of child-birth.

बालम अस मन मिलयउं, जस पय पानि ।
हंसनि महल सवतिया, लह बिलगानि ॥२५॥

I have united with my lover as water with the milk but the co-wife has separated us as the swan separates water from milk.

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Formerly a lecturer in Music and then in History at the National Defence Academy, Kharakvasla, Poona, Dr. Samar Bahadur Singh is now a Station Director in All India Radio. A distinguished student of both History and Music, Dr. Singh has been writing extensively on topics of History as well as Music.

'RAHIM' was the subject of his special research for the Ph. D. In the present book he has attempted to present an authentic and balanced biography of Rahim based on the available original sources bringing out the contributions made by Rahim in the field of politics as well as literature.